



Teachers' Professional Ethics And Instructional Performance As Correlates of Secondary Schools Students' Achievement In Social Studies In Yenagoa Local Government, Bayelsa State

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated teachers' compliance with professional ethics and instructional tasks performance, and determined the implication on students' academic performance in social studies in Yenagoa Local Government, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Three research questions were raised and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Ninety (90) top management officers (principals, vice principals, heads of departments, guidance and counselors, and examination officers completed questionnaire titled "Teachers Professional Ethics and Instructional Tasks Performance Questionnaire (TPEITPQ), and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (SAPQ)) in nine (9) secondary schools using random sampling technique. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) at 0.05 level of significance was used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' professional ethics and instructional performance [$r(88) = 0.694, p < 0.05$], also there is significant relationship between teachers' instructional tasks performance and students' academic performance [$r(88) = 0.79, p < 0.05$]. Based on the findings, it was concluded that principals should collaborate with other professional bodies to organize intensive and regular seminars/workshops for capacity development of teachers to enhance professional conduct. Also, the state government in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders in the education sector should create enabling environment to enhance teachers' professional ethical standards and provide adequate learning facilities/materials to boost teachers' instructional tasks performance and achieve better academic performance of students in secondary schools.

Keywords: Professional Ethics, Instructional Tasks Performance, Students' Academic Performance Social Studies

INTRODUCTION

Social studies has an important place in basic education regarding primarily preparing and adapting individuals to social life. It is a course that provides knowledge, skills, behavior and human values necessary for being an effective citizen who knows its social rights and responsibilities. Social

studies covers many disciplines, especially the field of social sciences which is directly related to human life, and the disciplines of history, geography, philosophy, psychology, sociology, political science, economics, law, and citizenship are among the leading ones within social sciences. The necessity of addressing the subjects of social sciences with an interdisciplinary approach is highly emphasized in the Social Studies Curriculum of the Ministry of National Education (MEB, 2017).

National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) defines social studies as "...The integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world" (NCSS,1993). Social studies educator's discussions in decades about defining social studies and purpose of social studies means that generalizations about the field can be elusive (Levstik & Tyson, 2008).

The social studies curriculum aims at developing students' generic skills such as creative thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, doing research, as well as their historical skills such as perception of time and chronology, perception of change and continuity, use of evidence, geographical skills with perception of space and observation, and understanding of essential approaches in this field (MEB, 2005). The social studies curriculum covers creative thinking, critical thinking, entrepreneurship, empathy, communication, problem-solving, and doing research. In addition, social studies, which includes values such as acting scientifically, diligence, justice, sensitivity, responsibility, and independence, has an important place in values education.

Teachers' professional ethics are the prescribed norms, values, principles, rules, regulations and standards governing teachers' professional conduct. The quality of education and students' performance depends on teachers' instructional tasks performance which is guided by ethics of the teaching profession. Teachers are expected to demonstrate expert knowledge and specialized skills in translating educational policies, principles and curriculum contents into actions during teaching-learning process in order to achieve the desired learning outcome. Instructional tasks are statutory curricula functions that are performed by teachers to enable learners achieve the set educational goals in schools. This means that the real teacher must possess the qualities for effective teaching and learning. The teacher must know what to teach, how to teach, and whom to teach. The purpose is to deliver the curriculum effectively and efficiently, so as to achieve the set goals and standards in schools (Ayeeni, 2011; Koleoso, 2002).

Teacher's instructional task performance is facilitated by the ability of the teacher to demonstrate sound professional attributes like scholarship through continuous research and it is pivotal to successful teaching, students' learning outcomes and attainment of quality education in secondary schools. Teachers' professional ethics are manifested in their knowledge of the subject-matter, pedagogical skills and competences in the teaching-learning process, which leads to the accomplishment of the stated educational goals. Bangbade (2004) found that teachers' professional ethics have significant relationship with students' academic performance; such professional ethics according to Bangbade (2004) include teachers' knowledge of the subject matter, communication skill, emotional stability, good human relations and interest in the job.

The quality of students' academic achievement in Nigerian secondary schools has been observed to be dwindling/relatively low as revealed in the percentage of students who obtained credit level passes in five subjects including English Language and Mathematics in the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations which reflected 52.92% in 2016, 59.22% in 2017 and 49.98% in 2018 (Adenipekun, 2018). This relatively low level of performance could be partly attributed to lack of teachers' full commitment to professional ethics. Teaching is the art of imparting knowledge to the learners. This is the primary duty of a teacher who has gone through a proscribed period of professional training. Teaching is not a profession for 'all comers'. This is the reason why the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) was established by Decree (now Act) 31 of 1993. The Council became operational by June, 2000. It is aptly stated in section 5 sub-section 100 (a) of the National Policy on Education that "Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN)

shall continue to register teachers and regulate teaching profession and practice” (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). The TRCN among other responsibilities has the mandate to enforce professional ethical conduct among teachers and prosecute erring ones using the Teachers Tribunal which has powers under the law to met out punishments. The Teachers’ Registration Council also has the responsibility to support continuing professional development of teachers and promote teaching as a profession (Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, 2005). When teachers are seen upholding a sound professional conduct, it creates a high level of public confidence and trust in the teaching profession. Since its inception, the TRCN has taken up the challenge of ensuring that teachers in the profession are actually trained and certified to do their job well. However, students’ academic performance is relatively low in Nigerian secondary schools probably because the schools are still riddled with teachers who lack full commitment to professional ethics. In Nigeria, the Teachers’ Registration Council has stipulated that all teachers should abide by its code of ethics. Furthermore, the council has the mandate to publish and maintain codes of professional conduct for teachers, which shall include the standards of teaching, knowledge, skill and competence. The Teachers’ Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) is committed to ensuring that the code of professional conduct for teachers is promoted and observed by ensuring that every teacher possesses the prescribed teaching qualification(s) and registers as a member of the TRCN. This is to maintain public trust and confidence in the teaching profession. Akuezilo and Akudolu (2006) posited that TRCN has made the mandatory continuous professional education part of the requirements for renewal of teachers’ practicing licenses while teachers at all levels of education without teaching qualifications are mandated to undergo a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), in order to become certified teachers.

Statement of the Problem

It is a common knowledge that when teachers are seen upholding sound professional conduct, it creates a high level of public confidence and trust in the teaching profession. However, the issue of declining academic performance of students in Nigeria secondary schools has generated much concern among stakeholders in the education sector. This has been partly attributed to lack of teachers’ full commitment to professional ethics, which affects students’ academic performance. This public outcry calls for further investigation into teachers’ compliance with teaching professional ethics (norms, values, principles and regulations) in the performance of instructional tasks, with a view to determining their implications on students’ academic performance in social studies, using Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, Nigeria as a case study.

Purpose of the study

The study investigated the teachers’ professional ethics and instructional performance as correlates of secondary school students’ academic achievement in social studies in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following:

- 1) The level of teachers’ compliance with professional ethics in secondary schools in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa state, Nigeria.
- 2) The level of teachers’ effectiveness in instructional task performance in secondary schools in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa state, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What is the level of teachers’ compliance with professional ethics in secondary schools in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa state, Nigeria?
2. What is the level of teachers’ effectiveness in instructional task performance in secondary schools in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa state, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

HO1: There is no significant relationship between teachers’ professional ethics and instructional task performance in social studies.

HO2: There is no significant relationship between teachers’ instructional task performance and students’ academic achievement in social studies.

METHODOLOGY

The research design that will be adopted for the study is the correlational research design. Gay (2016) described a correlational survey as a study that involves the collecting of data in order to determine whether, and to what degree, a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables. This design is considered appropriate for the study because the study seeks to examine the relationship between the independent variable which are teachers' professional ethics, instructional performance and the dependent variable which is students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The population of this study was all teachers in the 39 public Secondary Schools in Yenagoa Local Government Area, of Bayelsa State. The population of teachers in public secondary Schools in Yenagoa Local Government Area in the 2020/2021 academic session is One Thousand two Hundred and Eighty Seven (1,287) (Bayelsa State Post Primary Schools Board, 2021). A sample of two hundred and forty seven (247) teachers were used in this research work. The sampling technique used in this study is the Cluster Random Sampling technique. Cluster breaks a population into different relevant units. In this case, Yenagoa Local Government is made of three (3) constituencies. The three constituencies acted as clusters and was further broken down to three (3) schools per Cluster. All the two hundred and forty seven teachers (247) in the nine schools formed the sample.

Table 1: Sampled schools and teachers in Yenagoa LGA

CONSTITUENCY	SCHOOLS	NO OF TEACHERS
Epie/Afissa	BDGS Yenagoa	77
	CSS Igbogene	37
	SJGSS Amaratha	66
Gbarain/Ekpetiama	GGs Okolobiri	14
	OMGS Ikibiri	06
	ECHS Tombia	13
Okordia/Zarama/Beseni	CSS Biseni	10
	CSS Okordia	13
	CSS Zarama	11
	TOTAL	247

Schools in Constituency I produced 60% of the students because of the metropolitan/urban nature while the other two constituencies produced 40% and 20% respectively, because they are in the rural area. The instrument for data collection were "Teachers Professional Ethics and Instructional Tasks Questionnaire" (TPEITQ) and "Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire" (SAPQ) developed by the researcher. The questionnaire contains an introductory letter for their candid and unbiased opinion. This was followed with section A and B. Section A, was on the personal data of the respondents while section B utilized a four-point Likert rating scale classified as Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with value of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The section B contained 11 items which cover variables such as punctuality, knowledge of the subject matter, preparation of lesson notes, communication skill, time management, human relations, dressing habit, class management, continuous assessment, students' discipline, and committee work. Students' academic performance variable is the achievement recorded in the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) between 2018 and 2020. The instrument was given to one expert in measurement/evaluation. These experts validated the items in terms of clarity of words, face and content validity. Corrections and suggestions by the experts were included in the final version of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through test-retest method. 20 teachers' in secondary schools in Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State were twice administered the instrument within a time lag of 14 days. The scores collected from each of the tests were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and this yielded a coefficient score of 0.80 which was deemed as reliable for the study. The researcher visited all the schools selected for the study to administer questionnaires. The researcher sought for the permission of the principals and solicited for the cooperation of the respondents in completing the questionnaires. The researcher was assisted by one trained research assistant who helped in the administration of

questionnaires in the sampled schools while completed questionnaires were collected from the respondents on the same day. The few respondents who could not fill the questionnaire on the spot were given opportunity till the next day when the researcher visited their schools to collect completed questionnaire. The administration of the instrument took three (3) working days. This method ensured 100% rate of return of the questionnaire. The research questions were analyzed using frequency count and percentage while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule for answering the research questions was arrived at by finding the average of the 4-point scale, thus; $\frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.50$ thus, any item with mean of 2.50 and above will be interpreted as High Level (HL), while mean score below will be interpreted as Low Level (LL). For the hypotheses, the decision rule is that if the calculated r-value (reliability coefficient) is greater than the critical or table value, the null hypothesis would be rejected, otherwise, it would not be rejected.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Research questions

Research Question I: *What is the level of teachers' compliance with professional ethics in secondary schools in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State?*

Table2: Teachers' Compliance with Professional Ethics (n = 247)

S/N	ITEMS	X	SD	REMARK
1	All teachers are punctual to schools	2.76	0.56	HL
2	All teacher have good communication skills	2.87	0.61	HL
3	All teachers demonstrate good human relations	2.63	0.71	HL
4	All teachers have good time management	2.59	0.51	HL
5	All teachers have sound knowledge of the subject matter	2.62	0.71	HL
6	All teachers have good dressing habit	2.57	0.61	HL

Source: Field work (2021)

The analysis of data in table 2 indicated that the level of teachers' compliance with professional ethics was high since all items were rated above the criteria mean value of 2.50

Research Question II: *What is the level of teachers' effectiveness in instructional tasks performance in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State?*

Table 3: Teachers' Instructional Tasks Performance (n = 247)

S/N	ITEMS	X	SD	REMARK
7	All teachers prepare their lesson notes adequately and regularly	2.67	0.59	HL
8	All teachers conduct continuous assessment regularly	2.58	0.63	HL
9	All teachers maintain good classroom management	2.59	0.54	HL
10	All teachers demonstrate good human relations	2.71	0.47	HL
11	All teachers have good time management	2.60	0.45	HL
12	All teachers support the school management on students' discipline	2.60	0.59	HL
13	All teachers participate actively in committees work.	2.57	0.61	HL

Source: Field work (2021)

The analysis of data in table 3 indicated that the level of teachers' effectiveness was high. This was based on the fact that the mean values were higher than the criteria mean value of 2.50.

Hypotheses

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between teachers’ professional ethics and teachers’ instructional tasks performance in secondary schools in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Table 4: Relationship between Teachers’ Professional Ethics and Instructional Tasks Performance

Category	N	Mean	St.D	d _f	P	r _{cal}	r _{crit}	Decision
Teachers Professional ethics’	247	1.55	0.47	148	0.05	1.730	1.960	Reject Ho ₁
students’ academic Perf	247	1.58	0.57					

Hypothesis one was tested by correlating data collected on teachers’ professional ethics with teachers’ instructional tasks performance in the nine (9) sampled secondary schools, using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). The result is presented in table 4 revealed that the calculated r-value (1.730) was greater than the critical-value (0.205) at p<0.05 is significant. Hence, the null hypothesis (Ho) of no significant relationship is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This implied that there is a significant relationship between teachers’ professional ethics and teachers’ instructional tasks performance in secondary schools.

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between teachers’ instructional tasks performance and students’ academic achievement in social studies in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Table 5: Relationship between Teachers’ Instructional Tasks and Students’ Academic Performance

Category	N	Mean	St.D	d _f	P	r _{cal}	r _{crit}	Decision
Teachers instructional task’	150	1.55	0.47	148	0.05	0.79	1.960	Reject Ho ₂
Students’ academic Perf.	150	1.58	0.57					

The result on table 6 indicated that r-cal (0.790) is greater than r-tab (0.205). This implied that there is a significant relationship between teachers’ instructional tasks performance and students’ academic performance at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis of no relationship is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

The results obtained from the analysis of data on research question one in table 1 indicated that teachers complied highly with professional ethics in punctuality, good communication skills, positive human relations, effective time management, adequate knowledge of subject matter and good dressing habit in secondary schools in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. This was in consonance with Creamers (2014) that stated that what makes an effective teacher include the professional ethics which are imbibed and demonstrated by teachers in time management, and appropriate teaching techniques. This was also supported by Tyessi, (2015) who claimed that the subjects taught by teachers might not necessarily be students’ favorite, yet teachers dressing endeared them as role model to their students.

The findings on research question two in table 2 revealed that professional ethics have positive impact on teachers’ instructional tasks performance. Majority of teachers prepared their lesson notes promptly, conduct continuous assessment regularly, maintained good classroom management, ensured students’ discipline and participated actively in committees’ work. This was in consonance with Babalola (2010) that posited that maintenance of good classroom is an instructional task performed by most school teachers.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, teachers’ professional ethics and instructional tasks have significant influence on students’ academic performance. This implied that most teachers complied with professional

ethics and demonstrated the desired commitment to instructional task performance in secondary schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) Government should provide adequate learning facilities and materials to improve teachers' instructional tasks performance and students' academic performance in secondary schools.
- 2) Principals should collaborate with other professional bodies to organize intensive and regular seminars/workshops for capacity development of teachers to enhance professional conduct and quality of teaching-learning process in secondary schools.
- 3) Teachers should demonstrate strong commitment to their profession, imbibe the right attitude to work and give their best in the performance of instructional tasks in order to improve students' academic performance.

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