



Students' Perception of Business Studies Trainee-Teachers and Classroom Conduct in Port-Harcourt Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

The core mandate of this study was to examine students' perception of Business studies trainee-teachers and its influence on their classroom conduct in Port-Harcourt secondary schools. The total population of the study was 5,725 people which consist of 5,522 Junior Secondary School (JSS2) students in Port-Harcourt Secondary Schools and 203 level four (4) students of Business Education Department, Rivers State University, Port-Harcourt. A sample size of 509 students was drawn using Taro Yamane formula for sample size determination and simple random sampling technique. The instruments for data collection were two self-structured questionnaires developed from literature. The two questionnaire instruments contained 29 items. Three research questions were raised to guide the study; while three research hypotheses were also developed and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a descriptive research survey method. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions, while z-test was used to test the hypotheses. The study revealed that secondary school students have a negative perception of business studies trainee-teachers. Also, trainee-teachers have a great role in influencing the students' perception of them. Based on the findings, it was recommended that school administrators and their academic staff should always treat the business studies trainee teachers with maximum regard especially in the presence of the secondary school students so as to make the students to perceive the business studies trainee teachers in a positive perspective which in turn, influences their conduct in the classroom.

Keywords: Trainee-Teachers, Business Studies, Perception, Classroom conduct

INTRODUCTION

The most pertinent priorities for the business studies trainee-teachers in dealing with secondary school students' misconduct in Port-Harcourt metropolis will be to maintain a secure and safe environment and also protect the classroom environment from threats posed by potentially dangerous troubled students. These priorities will obviously require recognizing the warning signs of trouble and preparedness to respond appropriately and decisively. Other priorities will include maintaining a classroom atmosphere of respect and civility, avoiding being manipulated by students with unreasonable demands, responding appropriately to unfounded allegations, and protecting oneself and one's institution from frivolous lawsuit. However, understanding how the range of students' misconduct tends to cluster along certain distinctive, recognizable styles is empowering and helpful to the business studies trainee-teachers (Amada, 2010).

This classroom conduct by secondary school students pertains to the particular attitude of the students towards the business studies student teachers, their fellow students and classroom rules. It could either be negative or positive. But irrespective of what the conduct could be, the manner with which the business studies student teachers handle such conduct goes a long way to contribute to what forms part of the

students' perception of them. According to Amada (2010), some of these negative students' classroom conduct which may arise as a result of the students' poor perception of business studies trainee-teachers may include; undermining of the business studies trainee-teachers' authority, too much side attraction and distraction, spacing out or sleeping in class, frequent absence or tardiness, food and cell phone disruptions, disrespectful behaviour, plagiarism or lying.

However, it is argued that effective teachers (and business studies student teachers) can prevent all misconduct by keeping students interested in learning through the use of existing classroom materials and activities. The implication of this assertion is that for the business studies trainee-teachers, maintaining good student classroom conduct is like surgery which requires precision – no cuts, no rambling comments and a demonstration of self discipline and good manners in the classroom. Thus, a negative classroom conduct tends to retard the smoothness and effectiveness of teaching and also impede the learning of the students while the positive student classroom conduct seeks to accentuate classroom harmony and effective classroom teaching and learning (Sun & Shek, 2012; Ohaka, 2016). With this, Barry (2012) asserted that when classroom conduct becomes it increases stress level s for both teachers and students disrupt the flow of lesson. Also, the business studies trainee-teachers need to demonstrate general understanding of business studies subject contents and one of them according to Epumepu and Igbenedion (2014) involves helping secondary school students to develop manipulative skills, inventiveness and respect for dignity of labour.

No wonder business studies is defined as a subject that prepares and arms students with knowledge aimed at creating career awareness of saleable skills that will enable them to fit into the world of work with little or no difficulty. Hence, the reason it is perceived to be part of vocational education within the entire secondary school programme across the nation. Also, it is made up of five components units namely; Typewriting, Shorthand, Book-keeping, Commerce and Office practice (Okolocha & Nwadiani, 2014). According to the Revised National Policy on Education (2004), Business studies are classified as “practical subject”. It combines both theory and practice which makes recipients later in life to act as both employees and employers of labour. Business studies serves as an introduction to the social science subjects in the senior secondary schools. It helps students to develop manipulative skills, inventiveness and respect for dignity of labour. It develops in them the understanding and attitude needed for success to advance in their studies (Epumepu & Igbenedion, 2014).

In the same vein, a business studies student teacher can be considered to be a “baby teacher” who undergoes both theoretical and practical training programme in a teacher-training tertiary institution of learning so as to gain knowledge, acquire skills and form desirable attitudes. They are young teachers undergoing a teacher training programme mostly under the department of business education. Usually, they undergo a compulsory teaching practice experience where according to Georgewill (2016), they are made to apply the methods, principles, concepts, psychology and even the philosophy of education which they were taught theoretically in the classroom. In fact, teaching practice is the most vital part of student-teacher career training. It is a professional requirement in education which is to the teacher what internship is to the medical doctor or what chamber attachment is to the lawyer. Thus, the teaching practice programmed cannot only be deemphasized but remains sacrosanct and momentous (Amaewhule, 2006; Ohaka, 2016; Ohaka, 2017; Georgewill, 2016). This exercise makes the business studies student teachers to be exposed to the realities of teaching as it enables them to also attempt other novel methods of teaching and maintenance of good secondary school students' classroom conduct no matter the perception the secondary school students could have of them.

This implies that, teaching practice provides the business studies student teachers some type of pre-service training which serves as an opportunity to be exposed to the realities of teaching and performance of professional activities. It also provides business studies trainee teachers the opportunity to practice the use of various disciplinary measures to regulate students' classroom conduct. Sequel to this, business studies trainee-teachers have been encouraged to adopt various teaching models that bring about good student classroom conduct during the practice of teaching (Ogonor & Badmus, 2016)

Notwithstanding, when talking about secondary school students' classroom conduct, it is first imperative to consider that without order provided by effective classroom control, there will be little hope for the business studies student teachers to instruct in any consistent and effective manner. Also, some scholars argued that when business studies student teachers feel that they need to discipline students, it is often because there was a lack of procedures and routine in place. Classroom learning requires good classroom conduct and, while it may be very cumbersome, it is central to what business studies student teachers need to do.

With this perception in mind, it is contended that the greatest fear of student teachers across the nation is losing control of a classroom of students. These fears are well-founded, because for the majority of educators and "business studies student teachers", this constitutes the most difficult aspect of the teaching profession they intend to venture into (Walter & Frei, 2007). Researchers Dollase and Gordon in Walter and Frei (2007) reached this conclusion when they reported that the biggest challenge that teachers face is maintaining discipline and order in their classrooms.

Thus, considering the centrality of the teaching practice programme to the student teachers' development of professional competence, it is expected that the student teachers become more conscious of the kind of impression they create of themselves before the students in the classroom as this also contributes integrally in the students' perceptual formation process about them which influences their classroom conduct negatively or positively as positive impression attracts positive perception. To say the least, those misconducts turns out to pose immense challenges and threats to the student teachers during teaching practice as they on their part attempt to deal with them on daily bases thereby retarding the realization of the classroom behavioral and/or instructional objectives.

Despite the above trend, it appears that some of the business studies student teachers have not bordered to find out how the students perceive them and whether or not such perception is what influences their conduct in the classroom. Also, in the past, several scales have been developed seeking to actually measure teachers' perception of classroom conduct (Sun & Shek, 2012) but no studies have been out to investigate whether these classroom conduct is as a result of how the students perceive the student teachers during teaching practice especially in the business education programme. Sequel to this supposed negligence, during their teaching practice exercise, creating a good impression in order to attract a positive perception of them from the students in order to maintain better teacher-students classroom conduct, often times constituted the most significant and clear concern to some of them.

Statement of the Problem

From the experiences shared at the culmination of the just concluded teaching practice programme of the Faculty of Technical and science education by the trainee teachers who taught business studies, it was observed that in some instances they wasted approximately one-half of all classroom time with some activities that seeks to maintain students' classroom conduct other than classroom instruction. According to them, this was usually as a result of the improper conduct being exhibited by some of the students. Such misconduct includes; interfering with classroom proceedings, making irrelevant comments, causing noisy interruptions, talking out of turn, fighting in the class, physically assaulting and harassing the business studies student teacher, eating and drinking in the class, leaving the classroom without obtaining due permission from the student teacher, among others. This causes them to encounter difficulty in an attempt to manage the classroom conduct of their students which possibly crops-in as result of the students' perception of them.

However, this improper conduct of students during classes, especially when the business studies student-teacher is teaching maybe traced to how these students perceive the business studies student-teachers. This means that, there may be a connection between how the secondary school students perceive the business studies teaching-practice students and their classroom conduct. The researchers therefore posed the following questions which guided the study;

- 1) What perceptions do secondary school students have of the Business Studies trainee- teachers in Port-Harcourt secondary school?
- 2) What possible roles could the business studies trainee-teachers perform in influencing the students' perception of them?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested at 0.5 level of significance;

- Ho1:** There is no significant difference in the mean responses of the male and female secondary students on their perception of the business studies-trainee teachers in Port-Harcourt secondary schools.
- Ho2:** There is no significant difference in the mean responses of the male and female business studies trainee teachers on the role they can perform to influence the secondary schools students' perception of them.

METHODS

The research adopted descriptive survey research design. The total population of the study is 5,725 which encompass the entire 5,522 male and female Junior Secondary School 2 students of government secondary schools in Port-Harcourt and 203 level 400 students of the Department of Business Education, Rivers State University, Port-Harcourt in the 2016/2017 academic session as shown in the table below;

Table 1: Population Distribution of level 400 Business Education Students in the 2016/2017 Academic Session and JSS 2 students of Government Secondary Schools in Port-Harcourt

S/N	OPTION	TOTAL NUMBER
1.	Accountancy	36
2.	Management	135
3.	Marketing	22
4.	Secretarial	10
5.	JSS 2 Students in Port-Harcourt	5,522
	SUM TOTAL	5,725

Source: Exams and Records Office of Business Education Department, RSU (2017) and Director's office, Junior Secondary Schools Board, (2016)

The Taro Yamen formula was used to derive the sample size which is 30 percent of the total population of the study. The sampling technique is the simple random sampling technique. Data for this study was collected by means of two structured questionnaire entitled: "Students' Perception of Business Studies Trainee-Teachers and Classroom Conduct Questionnaire" (SPBSTCCQ). Questionnaire 1 was structured specifically for the secondary school students while questionnaire 2 was has been structured specifically for the business studies-trainee teachers. The SPBSTCCQ has two sections; sections "A" and "B". Section "A" of both questionnaires seeks information on the demographic data of the respondents and contains five and three items respectively. Also, section "B" of SPBSTCCQ 1 & 2 seeks information about the views of the respondents regarding the topic of the study with 20 and 6 question items respectively. The questionnaires adopted the four point rating scale which are; Strongly Agreed (SA: 4points), Agreed (A: 3points), Disagreed (D: 2points) and Strongly Disagreed (SD: 1point). The draft questionnaire was subjected to preliminary face and content validation. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. In taking decision, a mean of 2.50 and above was Agreed, while any less than 2.50 was Disagreed. The null hypothesis was tested using a Z-test statistic at a level of significance of 0.05. The decision rule is that the null hypothesis will be rejected if the Z-calculated is found to be greater than the Z-critical.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *What perception do secondary school students have of the business studies trainee teachers in Port-Harcourt secondary schools?*

Table 2: Mean analysis of the perceptions secondary school students have of Business Studies Trainee teachers in Port-Harcourt secondary schools.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remarks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The business studies-trainee teachers are seen by you as those who;</i> 							
1.	are not yet mature and almost of the same age with you	10	15	98	190	1.50	0.73	Disagreed
2.	have similar size with you	8	21	141	143	1.66	0.72	Disagreed
3.	have little social status in the school	28	69	114	102	2.07	0.95	Agreed
4.	are not yet mature teachers who can actually transfer the correct knowledge	28	41	115	129	1.90	0.95	Disagreed
5.	usually do not have adequate knowledge about the subject he/she teaches	27	57	98	131	1.94	0.97	Disagreed
6.	have good interpersonal relationship with you	54	93	76	90	2.35	1.07	Agreed
7.	have a strong self esteem	78	107	65	63	2.64	1.09	Agreed
8.	have the ability to speak bodily in class	115	116	24	58	2.92	1.09	Agreed
9.	are usually friendly with the students	112	118	35	48	2.94	1.04	Agreed
10.	have good communication skills	104	123	33	53	2.89	1.05	Agreed
	Total Mean					22.81		
	Grand Mean					2.281		Agreed

Source: Field Survey, (2017)

The result of the findings in table 4.1 above reveals the perception secondary school students, have of business studies trainee teachers in port-Harcourt secondary schools. The respondents agreed to 6 out of 10 items on the table. These also includes; 3, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10; while 4 out of the 10 respondents disagreed. This also includes; items 1, 2, 4, and 5. The grand mean of 2.281 shows that secondary school students in Port-Harcourt have a positive perception of business studies trainee-teachers.

Research Question 2: *What possible role could the business studies trainee teacher perform in influencing the students' perception towards them?*

Table 3: Mean analysis of the role of Business studies trainee-teachers in influencing the students' perception towards them.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remarks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For you to influence the perception of the secondary school students towards you, you need to; 							
1.	provide proper and adequate information about yourself to the students at your first day in class	73	56	1	3	3.496	0.635	Strongly Agreed
2.	handle issues objectively, professionally and maturely in class	85	43	5	0	3.601	0.563	Strongly Agreed
3.	create good impressions about yourself in class	76	52	4	1	3.526	0.597	Strongly Agreed
4.	develop in the students good perceptual thinking of people around them	65	60	4	4	3.398	0.695	Strongly Agreed
5.	work on your self esteem and self worth	88	41	4	0	3.631	0.543	Strongly Agreed
6.	improve your communication skills	103	25	2	3	3.714	0.610	Strongly Agreed
7.	improve your knowledge base about the subject	86	45	2	0	3.631	0.610	Strongly Agreed
8.	use modern and adequate instructional resources	82	46	2	3	3.556	0.644	Strongly Agreed
	Total Mean					28.553		Strongly Agreed
	Grand Mean					3.569		Strongly Agreed

Source: Research Data, (2017)

The result of the findings as presented in table 4.3 above shows the possible role the business studies trainee teachers could perform in influencing the students' perception towards them. From the table, it is evident that, the respondents strongly agreed to all the items 1 to 8 on the table. Therefore, it could be inferred that the business studies trainee teachers have a major role to perform in influencing the students' perception of them. The grand mean of 3.569 shows that the business studies trainee teachers have a major role to perform so as to influence the perception the secondary school students could have of them.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean response of the male and female students on their perception of the Business Studies trainee teacher in Port-Harcourt secondary schools.

Table 4: Z-test showing the result on the significant difference in the mean responses of the male and female students on their perception of Business Studies trainee teachers in Port-Harcourt secondary schools

	<i>MALE</i>	<i>FEMALE</i>
Mean	2.482979	2.245865
Known Variance	0.08883	0.20438
Observations	47	266
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Z	4.598875	
P(Z<=z) one-tail	2.12E-06	
z Critical one-tail	1.644854	
P(Z<=z) two-tail	4.25E-06	
z Critical two-tail	1.959964	

Source: Field Survey, (2017)

The result in the table shows the calculated z of 4.598875 is higher than the z critical of 1.959964 for two-tail test at 0.05 level of significance. Following this, the hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it is maintained that there is a significant difference in the mean response of the male and female secondary school students on their perception of Business Studies trainee teachers in Port-Harcourt secondary schools.

Hypothesis 2: there is no significant difference in the mean response of the male and female business studies trainee teachers on the role they can perform to influence the secondary school students' perception of them.

Table 5: Z-test showing the result on the significant difference on the response of the male and female business studies trainee teachers on the role they can perform to influence the secondary school students' perception of them

	<i>MALE</i>	<i>FEMALE</i>
Mean	3.559722	3.572203
Known Variance	0.113194	0.160391
Observations	45	88
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Z	-0.1895	
P(Z<=z) one-tail	0.424851	
z Critical one-tail	1.644854	
P(Z<=z) two-tail	0.849703	
z Critical two-tail	1.959964	

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The result in the table above shows that the z calculated of -0.1895 is lower than the z critical of 1.959964 for a two-test tail at 0.05 level of significance. Following this, the hypothesis is accepted. This means that, there is no significant difference in the mean responses of the male and female Business Studies trainee teachers on the role they can perform to influence the secondary school students' perception of them.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research Question 1

In table 2 the result for research question one which were presented shows the perception that the secondary school students have of Business Studies Trainee Teachers in Port-Harcourt Secondary Schools. The table indicates that secondary school Students agree to the view that they have different perceptions of the Business Studies Trainee Teachers in Port-Harcourt. From the grand mean of 2.281 it could be inferred that perception of business studies trainee teachers by secondary school students in Port-Harcourt is greatly dependent upon disparate indices that are often times considered to be both intrinsic and extrinsic. This finding is also in consonance with the view of Intra-Personal Process (2017) where it was also noted that the perception an individual could have of another individual is based on their Age, personality traits, social status and role, professional competence, good subject mastery, communication skills, interests, and motives.

Research Question 2

In table 3 the result for the research question which is presented above shows the possible roles that the business studies trainee teachers could perform in influencing the students' perception towards them. The table reveals that for the business studies trainee teachers to influence the students' perception toward them, they must play a pivotal role which remains integral to the educational processes. Accordingly, such roles involves; procession of data and adequate information about themselves to the student at the first day in class, handling of issues objectively, professionally and maturely in class, creating of good impressions about themselves in class, developing in the student good perceptual thinking of people around them, working on their self esteem, improving their communication skills, amongst others. This finding is in tandem with the study carried out by intra personal process (2017) who presented eight (8) roles in which a business studies trainee teacher could perform in other to positively influence secondary school student perception towards them. It was stated that the business studies trainee teacher will have to; provide proper and adequate information about themselves to the student at their first day in class as regards their likes and dislikes attitudes and approaches towards specific issues, believes and abilities in order not to provide room for speculations which could also cumulate in distorted perception of them, handle issues objectively, professionally and maturely basing your conclusion about classrooms situations and occurrences on information that are grossly beneficial and significant and develop in the students critical thinking skills which make for advance human understanding and comprehension.

On the contrary, the result disagree with the position of Intra Personal Process (2017) as they argued that for the business studies trainee teachers to influence the secondary school students perception of them, they need to enhance the perceptual skills of the students by making them to; have accurate knowledge and new of themselves in the first instance, become emphatic in order for them to see the situation as it is been experienced by the business studies trainee teacher, have positive attitudes which help in the reduction of perceptual distortions, make possible efforts to avoid the possible common biases in perception, enhance their self concept which will enable them perceive the business studies trainee teachers more accurately, communicate with the business studies student to erase incorrect perception and avoid attribution.

CONCLUSIONS

The core mandate of this empirical study was to find out how students' perception of business studies trainee-teachers influences the conduct of secondary school students in Port-Harcourt. The study further discussed the perception secondary school students have of the business studies trainee teachers in Port-Harcourt secondary schools, the factors that influences the students' perception of business-studies trainee teachers in Port-Harcourt secondary schools and the possible roles the business studies trainee-teachers could perform in influencing the students' perception of them in Port-Harcourt secondary schools. However, based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that the way the secondary school students perceive the business studies trainee-teachers are responsible for their classroom conduct in Port-Harcourt secondary schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommended;

- (1) The Business Education programme as one of the relevant teacher training programmes in Rivers State, should consider crafting and integrating more strategies that will enhance the classroom management styles of the business studies trainee teachers in Port-Harcourt secondary schools. This will help to further accentuate their teacher effectiveness which in turn will make them to always be in total control of the conduct of the students despite their perception towards them.
- (2) The Business Studies trainee teachers should as a matter of utmost necessity make the students have a well developed knowledge of themselves in the areas of strengths, preferences, weakness and prejudices though such a developed self-knowledge can appear to be an uncomfortable process. This will tend to arm the students with the potential, skills and mindset of having a balanced view of others around his/her immediate environment.
- (3) School heads cum administrators in Port-Harcourt secondary schools should establish reinforcement mechanisms as a way of rewarding positive or negative classroom conduct of the students which will help to curtail the level of the secondary school students' misconduct in the classroom especially when the business studies trainee teachers are in the classroom. This will serve as a serious deterrent for students who may want to subsequently misconduct themselves in the classroom.
- (4) School administrators and their academic staff should always treat the business studies trainee teachers with maximum regard especially in the presence of the secondary school students. This will make the students to perceive the business studies trainee teachers in a positive perspective which in turn, influences their conduct in the classroom.

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