
EFFECTS OF PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS ON THEIR TEACHING PERFORMANCE: CASE STUDY OF GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN ETSAKO WEST LGA, EDO STATE

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Abstract

Teachers' professional attitude greatly affects their performance in the teaching and learning process. This study aims at exploring the perceptions of teachers regarding the relationship between teachers' professional attitude and their performance. Questionnaire was used for data collection from 250 teachers randomly sampled from 50 boys' secondary schools in the Local Education Authority. Data analysis revealed that, there is close relationship between teachers' professional attitude and their performance. According to the findings of the study, teachers with positive professional attitude performed better in the teaching and learning process. They are more motivated towards their profession. They are punctual in the school, they respect their students and colleagues, and they participate in the school academic activities enthusiastically. The study also found that, teachers with positive professional attitude have caring behaviour towards students, parents and their colleagues. They are passionate learners. However, the study discovered that teachers in the sampled schools have less opportunity for professional training which may cause a critical gap in the current practices of the teachers in the sampled schools. Therefore, on the basis of this study, it is recommended that, professional attitude of teachers could be further enhanced through institutionalizing continual professional development programmes in the schools. This will provide wider opportunities to the teachers in bringing about a paradigm shift in their attitudes towards teaching and learning.

Keywords: professional attitude, performance, learning process, professional development.

Introduction

There is a close relationship between teachers' professional attitude and their performance. Attitude is defined as a relational mental state that directs the behaviours of an individual. Different individuals have different mental dispositions, such as experience, belief, desires, hope, likes and dislikes and intentions. All these mental dynamics are essential components of attitude (Bain and Ken, 2004). Professionalism is performing assigned work with dedication and fervor. It contains attitude, beliefs and behaviours. Attitude is the manifestation of

professionalism. Professionals respect, care and coach others with whom they work. Their behaviour is collaborative and disciplined. Teaching is a professional field. Teachers' beliefs, experience, and perceptions have deeper influence upon their teaching practices. Attitude is a strong component in human personality. In any profession, negative or positive attitude affects the performance and the degree of realization of the goals (Balls and Lampert, 1999).

In the present day, one of the main concerns of parents, communities and students is the quality of education. Teacher is an essential

determining factor in the process of education. Positive attitude of teacher towards their profession defines the parameters of teaching and learning. Thus, the feelings, interest of teachers affect the performance of teachers. Teachers with positive attitude contribute more competently to the process of education of child. Personality of teacher is a role model for students. Effective teachers share their feelings more openly with their students. In this way, a relationship of trust is developed between teachers and learners (Brown and Richard, 2008). When teachers own the profession of teaching, it directly and positively impacts students' learning. Resultantly, they care, show kindness, accept diversity and share responsibility.

Statement of the problem

Professional attitude is a significant predictor of good teaching practices. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between professional attitude of teachers and teaching performance in Etsako West LGA, Edo State. Research has proved that, teachers with positive attitude towards teaching are able to teach effectively. They manage the process of teaching and learning competently. Therefore, in order to explore practices of teachers in the secondary schools in Etsako West LGA, this study found out how teachers' professional attitude makes a difference in their teaching performances.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the relationship between professional attitudes of teachers and their teaching performances in Government Secondary Schools in Etsako West LGA, Edo State.

Statement of hypothesis

Teacher is an essential component of the education process. The attitude and experiences of teachers affects not only the performance of students but also their own teaching performances. On the basis of this, it is hypothesized that there are significant relationships between professional attitude of teachers and their teaching practice.

Delimitation of the study

In view of uncertain security problems in other LGAs and limited time and resources at the disposal of the researcher, the study was delimited to government secondary school teachers in Etsako West LGA of Edo State.

Review of related literature

Professionalism is a set of attitudes and behaviours appropriate for a particular profession or occupation. It is a demonstration of certain characteristics or traits in a profession. Attitudes on the other hand, are positive or negative views of a person about a place, thing or a phenomenon. Professional attitude of a teacher is the demonstration of his/her like or dislike feelings. Emotions or behaviours towards teaching and learning practices in the realm of education. Research has proved that, teachers with positive attitude perform better in teaching and learning. They are more cooperative and dedicated in the dispensation of their duties as teachers. Professional attitude of teachers plays a fundamental role in shaping the behaviour of teachers (Carr, 1990).

Teachers who accept teaching as their profession kept direct relationship with other teachers, students, parents, communities and the society at large. They do not hesitate to share their experiences

with their colleagues. Rather, they seek guidance and provide support to others in the field of education. They consider themselves as guides, coaches and leaders in the process of teaching and learning. Hence, most attitudes are the result of direct experience and observations from the environment in which teachers operate as practitioners (Bass, 1999).

There are some attitudinal attributes of teachers such as positive thinking, belief in service, self-regulation, dedication, autonomy and guidance of others. These types of teachers consider their role as of a reformer and trainer. Their attitudes consist of care, kindness, accepting diversity and sharing responsibility. They have highly refined and effective communication skills which help them to interact with other more confidently and decently.

According to Baxter (1989), teachers with positive attitude have stable emotions and feelings. They demonstrate affection, patience, sincerity and care while interacting with teachers, parents or school staff. They do not work in isolation. Such teachers work in collaboration and they have high self-esteem. Students do not hesitate to meet them as they are accessible to everyone openly.

Positive professional attitude helps teachers develop the ability to establish shared environment where everyone is able to contribute, be it a student, a teacher or parent. They have a decent and complete control on the teaching and learning environment and monitor it effectively (Bean, 1996).

Modern concept of classroom is that, it is a community of learners. Students have the right and the responsibility to contribute. Therefore, it is important for teachers to allow students both fair responsibly and freedom to act. Teachers who have a positive thinking are able to create learning communities (Black, 1989).

Effective teachers understand the problems of students. They are empathetic, considerate and reflective. They know the diversity of issues associated with students and plan how to solve their problems (Brown, 1982).

Teachers' attitude also affects their own abilities. Positive approach in teaching enables the teachers to create a learning community where every student has access to meaningful learning opportunities. Teachers with positive attitude do not show mistakes of students, rather they work to improve their talents and enhance their skills and strengths. They inculcate in the minds of students positive self-confidence and self-esteem (Brown and Richard, 2008). In view of Bain and Ken (2004), teachers with positive attitudes are creative and motivated. They stimulate the creativity of students.

As a result, students become motivated to participate in the process of teaching and learning enthusiastically. They apply different approaches in their teaching which enables the students to learn in more than one way. In this way, students become motivated when teachers develop lesson plans and consider their interests, skills and needs. According to Tiberghien (1993) good teaching practice has the following characteristics:

1. Encouraging constant contact between students, teachers and parents.
2. Developing reciprocity and cooperation in the process of education.
3. Promote and practice active learning
4. Providing prompt and practicable feedback
5. Better planning and time management
6. Clear and to the point communication
7. Respect and care for everyone
8. Identify diversity in learning and use deferent ways of teaching and learning

Frequent interaction between teacher and student, teacher and parents and

community is the most important factor in student motivation and development. Teachers, with professionally sound beliefs, work for the cause of school development. They own the school and help students through guidance and support. In this way, students' intellectual growth continues to develop when they receive encouragement to think of the importance of values of life (White and Gunstone, 1993). Learning is enhanced through cooperation. Working with others increases the degree of involvement in learning. Teachers who have a passion for teaching and learning understand this very well. They share their own ideas freely and respond to others' reactions positively. This promotes active learning. It is the ultimate goal of education and development (Ball and Lampert, 1999). Students who receive timely and prompt feedback perform better in examination and other tests. They focus on learning and pay more attention. Teachers' role in this regard is more crucial. Only those teachers who take interest in the process of teaching and learning will focus on this area of education. Teachers and students are the most important components of education. One is incomplete without the other (Black, 1989).

Research Methodology

Population of Study

The population of study consisted of all the teachers in government secondary schools in Etsako West LGA of Edo State.

Sample

A sample of 250 teachers was randomly sampled from the population. The sample was selected from Etsako West LGA of Edo State.

Instrument

For data collection a close ended questionnaire was developed and administered to the selected sample. All the 250 teachers returned the distributed questionnaire. Thus, the rate of return was 100%. As part of research ethics, the samples were asked through consent letter to participate in the research study.

Reliability and Validity of Instrument

Besides, to ensure validity and reliability of the content, the questionnaire was piloted in five schools. After piloting the questionnaire, it was refined and revised. Finally, 250 questionnaires were sent to each sampled schools for data collection.

Data Analysis

The data was collected and interpreted in simple percentages. Furthermore, the results were also shown in graphic tables for more explanations. This helped in clear presentations of data. Likert Scale (Agreed (A), Undecided (U) and Disagreed (DA) was used as criterion to know the degree of agreeability of the respondents to the statements given in the questionnaire.

Findings and Results

Table 1: Frequency of response in percentage

SN	Teachers with positive professional attitude:	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed
		250 %	250 %	250 %
1	Join teaching as a choice not force	130 52%	70 28%	50 20%
2	Share their teaching experiences with other teachers	170 68%	45 18%	35 14%
3	Respect their students	190 76%	30 12%	30 12%
4	Use different techniques to make teaching interesting	180 72%	40 16%	30 12%
5	Provide guidance and support to students	200 80%	20 08%	10 04%

Table 1 shows that, majority of the teachers (52%) agreed that, teachers who have positive professional attitude join teaching as a choice not by force. This means those teachers who have positive professional attitude join teaching profession on the basis of their motivation and interest. In view of (68%), such teachers share their

teaching experiences with other teachers. (76%) were of the view that such teachers respect their students. 72% of the respondents agreed that, such teachers use different techniques during classroom teaching. A great majority (80%) agreed that, such teachers provide guidance and support to their students.

Table 2: Frequency of response in percentage

SN	Teachers with positive professional attitude:	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed
		250 %	250 %	250 %
1	Inform parents about their children progress	175 70%	25 10%	50 20%
2	Observe punctuality in school	180 72%	40 16%	30 12%
3	Make lesson plan to teach classes	195 78%	20 08%	35 14%
4	Share their feelings openly with colleagues	150 60%	50 20%	50 20%
5	Responds to the needs of students positively	170 68%	40 16%	40 16%

Table 2 shows that, most of the teachers (70%) agreed that, those teachers who have positive professional attitude inform parents about the progress of their children. About (72%) agreed that, such teachers observe punctuality in school. In

view of (78%), such teachers make lesson plans to teach classes. Whereas, (60%) of the teachers agreed that, such teachers share their feelings openly with colleagues. In view of (68%), such teachers respond to the needs of students positively.

Table 3: Frequency of response in percentage

SN	Teachers with positive professional attitude:	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed
		250 %	250 %	250 %
1	Manage classroom teaching and learning effectively	165 66%	40 16%	45 18%
2	Reflect on their teaching and learning experiences	140 56%	60 24%	50 20%
3	Have a caring nature	200 80%	40 16%	10 04%
4	Have an accessible nature	130 52%	80 32%	40 16%
5	Share responsibility with others	150 60%	50 20%	50 20%

Table 3 shows that (66%) respondents viewed those teachers who have positive professional attitude manage their classroom teaching and learning effectively. In view of (56%), such teachers reflect on their teaching and learning experiences.

According to (80%), such teachers have a caring nature. In view of (52%), such teachers have an accessible nature. Whereas, (60%) agreed that, such teachers share responsibility with others.

Table 4: Frequency of response in percentage

SN	Teachers with positive professional attitude:	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed
		250 %	250 %	250 %
1	Have clear communication skills	175 70%	50 20%	25 10%
2	Monitor the process of learning effectively	160 64%	50 20%	25 10%
3	Manage the behaviors of students competently	140 56%	60 24%	40 16%
4	Create learning communities in the classroom	150 60%	50 20%	50 24%
5	Evaluate the performance of students effectively	210 84%	60 24%	40 16%

According to table 4, most of the respondents (70%) agreed that, teachers who have positive professional attitude have clear communication skills. In view of (64%), such teachers monitor the process of learning effectively. Whereas, (56%) agreed that, such teachers manage the behavior of students competently. In view of (60%),

such teachers create learning communities in the classroom. According to (84%), such teachers evaluate the performance of students effectively.

Discussion

Teachers who accept teaching as their profession keep direct relationship with

other teachers, students, parents, communities and the society at large. They do not hesitate to share their experiences with their colleagues. Professional attitude is a significant predictor of good teaching practices. Frequent interaction between teacher and student, teacher and parents and community is the most important factor in student motivation and development. There are some attitudinal attributes of teachers such as positive thinking, belief in service, self-regulation, dedication, autonomy and guidance of others. These types of teachers consider their role as of a reformer and a trainer. Teachers with positive attitude contribute more competently to the process of education of child. Personality of teacher is a role model for students. Effective teachers share their feelings more openly with their students. Teachers' attitude also affects their own abilities. Positive approach in teaching enables the teachers to create a learning community where every student has access to meaningful learning opportunities. Teachers with positive attitude do not show mistakes of students, rather they work to improve their talents and enhance their skills and strengths. They inculcate in the minds of students' positive self-confidence and self-esteem. Teachers who have a passion for teaching and learning understand this very well. They share their own ideas freely and respond to others reactions positively.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study concludes that teachers with positive professional attitude perform better in the teaching and learning process. They are more motivated towards their profession. They are punctual in the school. They respect their students and colleagues. They participate in the school academic activities enthusiastically. The study also found that, teachers with positive professional attitude have caring behavior towards students, parents and their

colleagues. They are passionate learners. However, the study discovered that, teachers in the sample schools have less opportunities of professional training which may cause a critical gap in the current practices of the teachers in the sampled schools.

It is recommended on the basis of this research that, teachers should be provided with continuous professional trainings. This will help improve their relevant knowledge, enhance their skills, and shape their behaviors.

Future Research

This study explored the role of professional attitude on performance of teachers at secondary level in government sector. However, it is suggested for researcher to explore this issue at primary level in the government sector. This will provide a new understanding of the problem and its solution. It would also be of interest to explore the attitude of teachers in private and public schools.

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