

Male Teachers' Perception of the Teaching Profession and Their Relationship with Students in Public Secondary Schools in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

No meaningful learning can occur if those saddled with the responsibility of teaching do not show interest in the teaching profession. Hence the study sought to investigate male teachers' perception of the teaching profession and their relationship with the students in public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. One research question was formulated to guide this study. A Survey research design was adopted and a sample of 503 students was randomly drawn from the fourteen public secondary schools in Uyo Senatorial District. Questionnaire was used to collect the data, which was analysed using t-test. It was revealed that interest in the teaching job on the side of the male teachers led to cordial relationship with the students and positive attitude towards academics and school engagements. It was recommended that teaching qualification be made compulsory for teaching job seekers, adequate facilities be provided, rapid promotions, salaries and other benefits be paid when due.

Keywords: Male, Teachers, Perception, Teaching, Profession

INTRODUCTION

Education being the greatest hope of a nation especially for a developing country like Nigeria cannot just be left in the hands of mediocre or people who have no interest in the teaching profession. Hence, the transmission of knowledge and information from one generation to another require the services of individuals adequately trained and skilled in the teaching profession. Such individuals are teachers. They are assigned the role of transmitting the accumulated knowledge and values from one generation to the next (Akin, 2009).

Teaching is the classroom interaction, during which there is purposeful interaction between the teacher, the learner, the subject matter and the materials (Okon, 2006). Teaching is causing people to learn. One can hardly regard something as having been taught if it has not been learnt. Teaching is not merely giving information, but offering the child/learner a systematic guide to learn how to learn. The author further described teaching as involving "the consideration of the nature of the child, the goals to be attained, and finally the methods and materials required to attain those goals" p. 183. Teaching involves developing a policy and putting that policy into practice.

In the past, many people thought that just any one who could hold a piece of chalk and stand in front of learners was a teacher. For an individual to be regarded as an effective teacher, he needs to possess certain characteristics that befit this noble profession. It is the possession of these qualities that endears him to his students and the society. Failure to possess and display these qualities makes people cast doubt on the genuineness of his training and interest in the

teaching profession (Stake, 2010). An effective teacher is required to have a higher level of professionalism because of rapidly changing circumstances. Hayon (2009) emphasized that teachers who possess professional and interpersonal skills are more effective in their classrooms in terms of students' behaviour, attitude and achievement. The teaching profession requires certain dominant behaviours which show teacher's intellect, desire to excel, extended professionalism and teaching as a life concern. Teaching is a profession which exalts service above personal gains (Goodlings, Buram & Portland, 2005). It involves human nurturance, connectedness, warmth and love and the teacher's beliefs about his role in caring for the students, plays a crucial part in developing the personality of the students (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2005).

Stake (2010) further opined that male teachers who show interest in teaching profession establish a cordial relationship with their students thus encouraging them to learn and perform well in their academic pursuits, while other teachers who show no interest in teaching profession, but see it as a stepping stone to something higher, do not establish cordial relationship with their students thus hindering their academic pursuits. This set of teachers feel that teaching is a feminine profession. Therefore, according to Stake (2010) females are more tolerant and accommodative. The issue of gender generally describes roles played by male and female teachers and the relative power they wield within the teaching profession. Their perception can often be associated with their attitude towards teaching. In Akwa Ibom State, the teaching profession has an encouraging history. Teaching is one profession which government, parents and even the entire society expect so much from, because of the needed skills necessary for the labour force.

Bhatia and Bhatia (2008) described the teacher as a servant of the society entrusted with the task of modifying and developing the behaviour of the young child for maintaining and improving social patterns. The teacher can render this service to society only if he, above all, is a humanist – a human being in the true sense of the word. He is a person of high ideals and engaging personality. Wright (1987) described that the primary function of teachers is to motivate the learners who are not motivated and to nurture those who are already well motivated to the task of learning. To sustain the teacher's energy and enthusiasm for teaching, teachers need to maintain personal commitment to the job (Day, 2000). The author claimed that teacher's perception is a significant factor in his behaviour and it has great impact on student's achievement. This was also buttressed by the Federal Government of Nigeria (2013) as was expressed when it entrenched in the National Policy on Education that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers.

The dominance of the teaching profession by women has called for concern in several countries of the world. Jones (2003) noted that in England, female teachers had expressed concerns about the comparatively low number of men in the teaching profession and their hope of having more male elementary colleagues to offset the disproportionate number of female teachers. This lack of balance could lead to a difference in perceptions about female and male teachers and their relationships with students. In Nigeria, the imbalance in the number of male and female student teachers in the Colleges of Education and Faculties of Education in Universities seeks for a redress. This is necessary in order to protect and maintain the male teacher characteristics. The dominance of women in the teaching profession is not only peculiar in the third world countries as has been confirmed by some earlier research findings by Wood (2012). In Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria, according to Effanga (2009), female teachers dominate the teaching profession. None of the sectors of the school system could be said to be different. This is also the case in the different subject areas, mostly humanities and arts, in all the states of the federation.

In modern societies, physical strength and biological functions are less important factors in work-role ascription (Effanga, 2009). Moreover, Adesoji and Oladele (2008) found that teachers' gender has direct effect on students' relationship with them that male teachers with positive perception to teaching profession have cordial relationship with their students and those with negative perception have non-cordial relationship with the students.

Garet, Porter, and Desimone (2009) opined that male teachers are determined to face stress, complex situations and also find solution to problems which need new discovery. The authors also noted that male teachers with positive perception of the teaching profession have cordial relationship with their students, while those with negative perception have non-cordial relationship with the students. In other words, positive perception creates harmony while negative perception creates hostility. Explaining this further, male teacher can generally organize classroom better to achieve fewer behavioural problems.

Conversely, Dee (2009) had reported that many male teacher trainees regard teaching as a stepping-stone to other things. Although Denga (2008) asserted that sex has nothing to do with teachers' professional effectiveness, rather, a professionally trained teacher should pay attention to students' affective domain just like their cognitive domain. Research findings by Dee (2010) showed that having male teachers with positive perception of the teaching job significantly raises the achievement of students in social studies. Dee further contended that perception influence attitudes. The author claimed that learning from a male teacher of positive influence has effect on students' relationship, progress, and their engagements in school.

Chudgar and Sankar (2008) noted that male teachers were more focused on maintaining classroom authority by enforcing strict discipline. Furthermore, Green et al. (2008) identified one possible difference between female and male teachers' classroom management; female teachers perceive behaviour challenges to be more severe than do their male colleagues. However, Yavuz (2009) found no difference between female and male teachers' attitudes about classroom management or their instructional management.

Another area of concern in teachers' relationships with students is motivation. In a study, Jones (2003) found that female teachers overwhelmingly responded that male teachers would be better at motivating boys than would female teachers. However, the research also demonstrated that the longer the interview process lasted with female teachers, the more they would discuss limitations in male teachers' ability to motivate male students. In the mid-1900s, females were thought of as being perfectly capable of serving as role models for all students. Wiest (2003) noted that women were "deemed better suited to serve as role models and teachers of moral behaviour" and that they possessed "emotional qualities to work with youth" (p. 63). Even though Driessen's (2007) research emphatically showed that there was no statistically significant difference between men and women serving as role models, the author raised probing questions about teachers. For example, did students even look up to teachers as role models? Driessen (2007) went on to state: It is also the case that just as male teachers do not always constitute a suitable role model for boys, female teachers do not always constitute a suitable role model for girls. Furthermore, such matching according to sex may simply reinforce and strengthen stereotypes at times. Even if a male teacher can be a positive role model for his students, Martino and Kehler (2006) argued that schools cannot solve "boys diverse educational and social problems" by simply providing male teachers in the building (p. 125). Cooney and Bittner (2001) rose the concern of some teachers "that a poor male role model could do a lot of damage in the classroom and it is important to be aware that good teaching is critical" (p. 81).

In a study on the perception of secondary school teachers of the teaching profession in Pakistan, Hussain, Ali, Ramzan and Qadeer (2011) carried out a descriptive study using an Attitude Scale towards Teaching Profession (ASTTP) which had sixty six items and four components. One of the objectives of the study was to determine teachers' attitude towards the teaching profession. Forty secondary schools and three teachers from each school were selected for the study. Mean standard deviation, t-test and correlation were applied to measure and compare the attitude of secondary school teachers towards the profession. The analysis of data revealed that male teachers had less positive attitude towards the teaching profession as compared to their female counterparts. The scores of female teachers (N=201, SD=12.9) was significantly higher than male teachers (N = 187, SD=16.3). To support the relationship between a teacher's perception and attitude, Celikoz and Cetin (2004) added that if teachers develop positive attitude towards their profession, they will develop creative thinking, motivate their students more easily, and adapt their verbal and non-verbal messages to their students.

There are indications from other findings that male teachers tend to be more authoritative whereas female teachers tend to be more supportive and expressive. Gourneau (2007) asserted that male teachers provide a more positive atmosphere for boys while Krieg (2009) opined that female teachers provide a more positive and conducive classroom atmosphere. However, a large body of research focuses on the gender of students and their academic performance while less research explores the impacts of the teachers' gender on students' relationship with the teachers.

It was against this background that this study sought to investigate the male teachers' perception of the teaching profession and their relationship with the students.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate male teachers' perception of the teaching profession and their relationship with the students in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Specifically the study aimed at investigating the influence of male teachers' perception of teaching profession on their relationship with the students.

RESEARCH QUESTION

A research question was formulated for this study thus: What is the influence of male teachers' perception of teaching professional on their relationship with the students?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant influence of male teachers' perception of the teaching profession on their relationship with the students.

METHODOLOGY

The survey design was used for this study. It was appropriate because the study gathered information and facts and made use of them.

The participants consisted of 503 students from public secondary schools. The students were selected using simple random sampling (hat and draw) technique. The participants were selected from the 14 public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. All the respondents took a 20-item Likert type scale questionnaire. This was developed by the researchers. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: A and B. Part A elicited personal information about the students and part B covered information on how students

perceived their teachers' feeling about teaching profession and their relationship with the teachers. The questionnaire was weighted 5 to 1 for positive items and vice-versa for all negatively worded items. Based on the responses, two categories of relationship were obtained: cordial and hostile.

The instrument was validated by other experts in Psychology as well as experts in Test, Measurements and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was established by administering the instrument on a group of teacher not included in sample of teachers using t-test procedure. Cronbach's alpha correlation estimate of 0.74 was realized. The researchers visited the sampled schools and administered the questionnaire.

RESULTS

The results of the data were coded and analysed and are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. t-test Analysis of Male Teachers' Perception of Teaching profession and their relationship with students (N = 503)

<i>Perception</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t-value</i>
Positive	294	50.387	16.176	
Negative	209	46.418	13.545	2.98

Critical $t=1.96$ significant at $p<.05$

The results in Table 1 show that there is a significant difference in the perception mean scores of male teachers based on their relationship with students. The calculated t-value of 2.89 with the degree of freedom of 501 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the hypothesis was rejected. That is to say that there is a significant difference between male teachers' perception of the teaching profession and their relationship with students.

DISCUSSION

The result of the study indicated that male teachers who have cordial relationship with the students have positive perception of the teaching profession. The mean score of above 46.418 was regarded as those male teachers who perceive teaching profession as positive and therefore establish cordial relationship with the students, this cordial relationship help the student to develop interest in their academics, thus performing well. Also, the mean score of 46.418 and below rated the male teacher perception of teaching profession as negative and this therefore resulted in teachers having non-cordial relationship with the students. This negative relationship also influences students' perception of learning negatively; this is to say positive perception leads to cordial relationship while negative perception raises hostility. This implies that such students develop no interest in academic.

The result is supported by Adesoji and Oladele (2008) who opined that male teachers with positive perception toward teaching profession had cordial relationship with the students while those with negative perception had non-cordial relationship with the students. As has been revealed, positive perception of the teaching profession should help teachers establish cordial relationship with their students. This positive perception affects the interest of the students in their academic pursuits. This is in line with Stake (2010) who observed that students who are taught by male teachers who show positive perception to teaching do well in school. Cordial relationship gives room to interest and interest gives rise to better

performance. The school being a designated place for learning is expected to have male teachers who show interest in the job to encourage learners and also to develop interest in academics as well as in the entire school environment (Dee, 2010).

CONCLUSION/ RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has revealed that male teachers with positive perception of teaching job have cordial relationship with the students and this promotes students' interest in school work. On the other hand, male teachers who see teaching job as a stepping-stone establish non-cordial relationship with the students and this influences their interest in school work. This set of male teachers see teaching profession as feminine based. It is important to note that male teachers' perception of the teaching job has significant influence on their relationship with the students.

Based on the finding of this study, the researchers recommend that males seeking teaching appointment should possess teaching qualification and should also become registered members of Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN). Government should endeavour to make teaching job attractive by providing enough classroom accommodation, staff rooms, toilet facilities and writing materials. Regular inspection of schools should be conducted in order to discipline teachers who are not interested in teaching. Such male teachers should be sacked and replaced with those who need the job. Rapid promotions, salaries and allowances should be paid as at when due.

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