

SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ATTITUDE AND WORK ETHICS IN IMO STATE OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study was focused on secondary school teachers' attitude and work ethics in Imo State of Nigeria. Attempt was made to fathom some of the attitude of teachers to work and its consequences. Two research questions and one hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. Questionnaire was used to collect data from 2600 teachers and 130 principals. Mean and z-Test were used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha levels of significance respectively. The findings of the study revealed that teachers have unethical attitude towards work and its consequences and there was no significant difference between the opinions of teachers and principals as regards the bribery of teachers and its consequences. It was recommended among others that government should set up monitory team and supervisory body to the teachers and their activities during official working hours.

Keywords: *Work Ethics, Attitude to Work, Job Commitment and Teachers' Role.*

Introduction

There exist many occupations as well as professions like law, medicine engineering, teaching, architecture, accounting, to mention but a few that stand to project the image of the various occupations. The activities of the members of these professional bodies are guided by some ethics, code of conduct or standard of behaviours. The Nigeria Teachers Service Manual (1997:7:8) noted some of the ethics of the teaching profession which demanded among others that teachers should dress modestly; live within their means and avoid financial embarrassment; be punctual to school and to classes; should not be absent from school without the express permission of the principal/headmaster; should not exploit their students; neither take bribe nor engage in

corruption in any form; not have carnal knowledge or indecent relationship with students of a school; not reveal examination questions whether internal or external to any one; and not take any form of alcoholic drinks during school hours.

The importance and urgent need for teacher positive attitude to work stem from the upsurge of educational standard and societal changes which set new expectation and standards for secondary school teachers. These call for growth, job commitment and dedication of the teacher in performance of their duties and to keep abreast with current ideals, knowledge, ethics and productivity. However, it is worthy of note that high ethical standard help in the upliftment of the good image of profession and financial viability of organization and

also serve as a means to motivate workers for high productivity. The importance of work ethics is to serve as the social control guide or principles that govern the conduct of the members of an occupation. It serves as the basis for deciding what is wrong or right, helps to guide the action of the member and aid in the general upliftment of the profession. Secondary school teachers are supposed to abide by the established principles and guideline in the performance of their professional duties. But where the teachers do not adhere to the work ethics their attitude could be adjudged unprofessional and unethical (Ail, 1992, 36).

The secondary school teachers are varied in their background, sex, qualifications, and experiences. As individuals, they exhibit different attitudes or approaches to work. Obunanim, (1993:41) and Igwe (1997:32) observed that the secondary schools were replete with truancy, absenteeism, immoral behaviours, indiscipline and general dislike or negative attitude to work. In other words, teachers were deemed not to observe the work ethics required of them. Remarkably, the indispensable and crucial roles teachers play in the educational system have attracted the attention of scholars, researchers, planners and administrators to conduct studies on teachers' attitude. Ebong (1995:27) noted that educational institutions like secondary schools do not take a systematic responsibility for the welfare and professional growth and development of their staff. Onyeachu's (1996:20) study on relationship between working condition and teachers' effectiveness in secondary schools found that teachers' conditions of service were not encouraging and the poor working condition leads to the negative attitude of the teacher to work and low motivation

to attain to high professional growth. The general attitude of secondary school teachers to work is of great concern to the general public. There is need to establish order and control in respect of teachers' conduct and behaviours as well as evolving ways and means of sustaining high ethical standard in the execution of their duties.

The study was designed to fathom teachers' attitude respect to work ethics as regards. Specifically, the study was set out to teachers' attitude to bribery and also the consequences of teacher attitude to work in Imo State of Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research question:

1. What is the attitude of secondary school teachers to work as regards to bribery?
2. What is the attitude of secondary school teachers to work as regards to consequences of bribery?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude scores of teachers and principals on teachers' bribery and its consequences.

Research Method

The study was a descriptive survey research design. The design is used for gathering and describing information on teacher attitude to work and consequences of the attitude to work. The population consists of all the teachers and principals in government owned secondary schools in Imo State of Nigeria. There are 308 principals, 8455 teachers in the secondary schools (Statistical data, Ministry of Education Owerri, 2005). A sample size of 2600 teachers and 130 principals are drawn

from the population for the study. Stratified random sampling techniques were employed for the study. One hundred and thirty schools were chosen for the study from each school, chosen 20 teachers were sampled for the study. The instruments for the study consist of document analysis and questionnaires developed by the researchers. The questionnaires were divided into two

sections, A and B, and also were structured in likert-type scale of 4 points. The questionnaire was validated by 2 experts in the Department of Educational Guidance and Counseling, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri. Data collected were analyzed using mean and rank order while the hypothesis was tested using z-Test statistic at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Analysis

Research question1: What is the attitude of secondary school teachers to work as regards to bribery?

Table 1: Mean responses of the respondents on teachers' bribery attitude to work.

S/N	Bribery	Mean	Rank Order
1.	Teachers allegedly collect money from student in exchanges for marks.	3.45	3 rd
2.	Teachers encourage examination malpractice by collecting money from students.	2.87	4 th
3.	Teachers collect money from parents in order to pass their children/ wards in examination.	3.77	1 st
4.	Male teachers collect bribe from female students either in cash or in kind.	3.70	2 nd
5.	Teachers have positive attitude towards bribery	2.69	5 th

Teachers and principals hold strong agreement in descending order of magnitude that teachers collect money from parents in order to pass their children/ wards in examination (mean set 3.77), male teacher collect bribe from female students either in cash or in kind

(mean set 3.70), teachers allegedly collect money from students in exchange for marks (mean set 3.45) and that teachers encourage examination malpractices by collecting from students (mean set 2.87) as well as have positive attitude towards bribery (mean 2.69).

Research question 2: What is the attitude of secondary school teachers to work as regards to consequences of bribery?

Table 2: Mean responses on the attitude of secondary school teachers to work as regards to consequences of bribery

S/N	Consequences	Mean	Rank Order
1.	Teachers attitude to work affect the standard of education	3.25	3 rd
2.	Teachers that are inadequately paid indulge in bribery and corruption of school system	3.26	2 nd
3.	Sex-based rapport between teachers and students contribute to poor academic standard	2.91	4 th

. Collection of money from students and parents by the teachers to inflate marks contribute to fallen and poor standard of education	3.55	1 st
5. Teachers' positive attitude to bribery could negatively influence students reading habit and performance.	2.78	5 th

Deduction from table 3 attested in descending order of magnitude that principals and teachers strongly agreed that collection of money from students and parents to inflate marks contribute to fallen and poor standard of education (mean set 3.55), teachers that are inadequately paid indulge in bribery and

corruption of school system (mean set 3.26), teachers attitude to work affect the standard of education (mean set 3.25) and sex-based rapport between teachers and students contribute to poor academic standard (mean set 2.91) as well as leading to poor reading habit (mean set 2.78).

Hypothesis Testing

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the attitude scores of teachers and principals on teachers' bribery and its consequences.

Table 3: z-Test analysis on hypothesis one

Variable	N	Mean	SD	α	Zcal	Ztab	Decision
Teachers	2600	14.592	2.067				Not Significant
Principals	130	13.252	2.182	0.05	0.021	1.96	

Table 3 shows that at 0.05 alpha level of significance, the tabulated value of 1.96 is greater than the calculated value is 0.02. This implies that the null hypothesis is retained. We therefore uphold that there is no significant difference in the attitude scores of teachers and principals on teachers' bribery and its consequences.

Discussion on Findings

Teachers and principals accepted that the teachers collect money from parents in order to pass their children/ wards in examination. Also, male teachers collect bribe from female students either in cash or in kind. This situation warrants students who are truants to lobby their ways to pass examination at all cost. These practices discourages hard working students and affect the standard of education and the image of the

teachers as a role model is in doubt. This result by implication goes to show that teachers support bribery in school based on their attitude. This result is agreement with Obunanim (1993) and Igwe (1997) who noted that teachers have positive attitude towards bribery in school based on absenteeism and truancy. On the test of hypothesis, the statement of hypothesis 1 was accepted implying that there is no significant difference in the attitude scores of teachers and principals on teachers' bribery and its consequences. In view of this study, it can be concluded that the attitudinal disposition of secondary school teachers to work were diverse and uncomplimentary and the consequence detrimental to work ethics, good governance and maintenance of standard in education.

Recommendations

1. Government should set up monitory team and supervisory body to the teachers and their activities during official working hours.
2. There is every need to set up disciplinary measures to enforce discipline among teachers who exploit their students.
3. Teachers' service manual and teachers' handbook should be made available to all secondary schools and to their teachers for study and practice.

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