

## Assessment of teachers' dedication, discipline, knowledge and skills in Kwara state basic schools, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined teachers' dedication, discipline, knowledge and skills in Kwara State basic schools, Nigeria. The study population comprised all the 1,591 head teachers, 3,907 assistant head teachers; and 440 principals, 1,112 vice principals and all the students in Kwara State lower and upper basic schools respectively. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to arrive at 30 head teachers, 78 assistant head teachers, 30 principals and 71 vice principals; and 20 Basic Nine students from each of the sampled upper basic schools as respondents in the study. Questionnaire was used to collect data, while mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data. The findings of the study revealed that teachers' dedication in Kwara State basic, Nigeria was average ( $(\bar{X}) = 3.06$ ). The study concluded that Kwara State basic school teachers should be more dedicated to their job by regularly preparing lesson notes, going to the classrooms at the right time and ensuring that the learners have a better understanding of the concepts taught.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

At the tertiary, secondary and basic levels of education, learning is a desired result which is expected from the learners by the teachers. In schools, for effective learning to take place, teachers have to actively engage in direct transmission of knowledge to the learners or serve as facilitators of learning within the four walls of the classrooms, laboratories or on the field. Specifically, at the basic schools which serve as the foundation of education in Nigeria, apart from the compulsory business of learning impartation which teachers must carry out, they are also expected to nurture, counsel, protect and discipline learners where necessary, to make them achieve the purpose for which they are sent to schools by their parents/guardians. According to Afe [1], teachers expected to not only impart knowledge to learners, but also protect and properly guide them to significantly enhance the attainment of educational goals. Teachers are solely saddled with the responsibility of translating educational policies and principles into actions based on the established standard during interaction with the learners. The crucial role of imparting knowledge or facilitating learning, among other activities carried out by teachers in schools, account for the reason they cannot be underrated in the attainment of the goals of basic schools in Nigeria. However, for teachers to actively discharge their duties in a way which would help learners to successfully acquire knowledge and consequently translate to the enhancement the basic school goals, they need to be highly disciplined and dedicated to their job; and adequately possess knowledge and skills.

In the opinion of Sulyman [2], dedication is a key element which should not dissociate employees in an organisation because it determines the extent to which they carry out their official duties, as well its overall success. Mills and Kaanakia [3] believed that employee dedication is very important to the success of the organisation. Employees' dedication is an important matter which every organisation needs to give a priority. An organisation with an array of dedicated employees is likely to be more effective in its operations than the one with poorly dedicated employees, all things being equal. Hewitt Associates [4] maintained that in an organisation, dedicated employees could be known via the following ways. They put in extra efforts and always exhibit behaviour which would facilitate organisational success; supply positive information to the people about their organisation; and exhibit an ultimate interest in identifying with the organisation. Mart [5] posited that dedicated teachers are likely to find it easy to arouse students' interests towards active learning and guide their intellectual and moral development to enhance their academic performance. In addition, teachers who are dedicated would be enthusiastic and passionate about the delivery of their official duties, as well as develop keen interest in ensuring academic success of the learners. Contrarily, teachers with poor dedication are likely to perform their job haphazardly and students' academic success might not be their priority. Sulyman [2] argued that discipline is very essential in an organisation because it determines how employees perform their job. Job performance of the employees with high discipline could be better than that of the employees with little or no discipline. Mangkunegara and Octorend [6] explained that discipline is the ability of an employee to control himself so as not to exhibit behaviour or perform an action which is not in consonance with the rules and regulations of the organisation. Were [7] stated that discipline is a factor which guides employees to make reasonable decision in an organisation. An employee, if disciplined at an early stage in the organisation grows up to become responsible and well-behaved. A disciplined employee usually strives to be dedicated, competent and committed to the realisation of goals of the organisation. Oghuvbu [8] stressed that basic school teachers are expected to be disciplined, because they are entrusted with the responsibility of preserving the future of the incoming generation and protect the destiny of the nation as a whole. Okeke [9] elucidated that teachers are categorised as special people saddled with the responsibility of molding the children into productive adults that would contribute to the national development. Based on the following views, it is very essential that teachers are disciplined. A teacher without discipline does not portray a good teacher and his indiscipline acts could be constitute hindrances to effective job performance and consequently result in poor students' academic performance.

Possession of skills is very important to teachers because it determines how effective they impart knowledge to the learners. According to Jolayemi [10], adequate possession and utilisation of skills significantly assists teachers to plan the classroom activities in a way that could enhance effective learning; organise sitting arrangement of the students properly; monitor the students' behaviour towards learning; and coordinate their general activities during the lessons to facilitate realisation of the stated objectives. In the opinion of [11], students are human beings, and as such, they are not only dynamic in nature but difficult to control. Hence, teachers should be highly skilled in managing students' behaviour to make them serious to learning and consequently enhance their academic performance. In addition, classroom teaching is an exercise which involves series of activities to be carried out by teachers. How skilled a teacher is could determine how outstanding his or her students perform academically. Oni [12] believed that the quality of the educational system is anchored on the effectiveness of the skills of the teachers. A school without adequate skilled teachers could find it difficult to achieve the stated goals and objectives. Owolabi [13] maintained that government should ensure that skilled teachers who are willing to contribute their wealth of experience to improving the quality of education are injected into the system. This is one of the ways through which the falling standards of education in Nigeria could be saved.

In addition, teaching is not an activity which should be anchored by anyhow teachers; rather, it involves having a stock of skilled teachers who can systematically and professionally plan and effectively impart knowledge to the learners to actualise the stated goals. It could be stated that, inadequate possession of skills by some teachers could be one of the causes of poor students' academic performance in public basic schools in Nigeria. Cochran-Smith and Zeichner [14] posited that the importance of knowledge to teachers cannot be over-emphasised. The level of a teacher's knowledge in a particular subject could determine the performance of the students in that subject. Teacher education and professional development of teachers need to be given more adequate attention, because they are the key ways through which teachers acquire knowledge of the subject matter [15, 16]. Knowledge is an important instrument which helps teachers to effectively perform their job in a way which would facilitate realisation of the quality goals of education. Without adequate knowledge, teachers' job performance could be ineffective; hence, poor students' academic performance. To support the information above, Obanya [17] found that there was a significant relationship between teachers' knowledge of subject matter and academic performance. Hence, if a teacher has adequate knowledge of the subject he or she teaches, students could have strong affection for him or her and this is likely to enhance their good performance in his or her subject. Samson [18] argued that teachers are

instrumental to translating educational policies into successful implementation. To effectively carry out this, teachers need to possess adequate knowledge. Knowledge is very significant to the teachers, this is because no teacher can give what it does not have. Learners are enrolled in schools to tap from the teachers' knowledge. For learning to successfully occur, it is imperative that teachers, from whom learners are expected to derive knowledge, also possess adequate knowledge of subject matter, pedagogy and the likes. Olasehinde-Williams et al. [19] lamented that inadequate knowledge of some teachers in Nigerian basic schools could hinder their effective job performance.

Based on the above discussions, the researcher decided to conduct a study on the assessment of teachers' dedication, discipline, knowledge and skills in Kwara State basic schools, Nigeria. Dedication, discipline, knowledge and skills of some teachers in Kwara State basic schools, Nigeria seem not good enough to enable them effectively discharge their duties in the way which would enhance outstanding students' academic performance and overall goals. This was based on the personal observation of the researcher, members of the public outcry and information gathered from some principals, vice principals, head teachers, assistant head teachers, teachers and students/pupils in the public basic schools in the LGA. Some teachers in these schools do not have in-depth knowledge of the subject matter, classroom management and usage of suitable methodology to convey information to the learners during the process of teaching and learning. Some teachers, due to the inefficacy of their skills, find it difficult to communicate effectively to the learners, assess learners to determine the areas of their strengths and weaknesses in learning, manage the allotted time for lessons effectively and utilise or improvise suitable instructional materials when the need arises. The problem of some teachers is poor records keeping, failure to wholeheartedly teach learners and epileptic or total abandoning of lesson plans preparation due to their poor dedication. Furthermore, there is high level of indiscipline among some teachers such as lateness to schools, absenteeism, absconding, bullying of learners and extortion of learners. All these result in ineffective teachers' job performance consequently lead poor quality of the basic education in the State.

However, many researchers had carried out related studies to the variables considered in this study. For instance, Akinsolu [20] conducted a study on teachers' knowledge indices as predictors of secondary school students' academic achievement in Kwara State. Ehiane [21] investigated teachers and students' academic performance in Nigerian secondary schools: Implications for planning. Akinyemi et al. [22] examined discipline and academic performance (A study of selected secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. Monday [23] investigated teachers' professional traits and students' academic performance in Lagos State senior secondary schools. It should be stated that all these previous studies are relevant to this present study, but none of them focused on assessment of teachers' dedication, discipline, knowledge and skills in Kwara State basic schools, Nigeria. This is the gap which this study filled.

The purpose of this study was to examine the level of teachers' dedication, discipline knowledge and skills in Kwara State basic schools, Nigeria. The following research questions were raised to guide the conduct of the study: 1) What is the level of teachers' dedication in Kwara State basic schools, Nigeria?; 2) What is the level of teachers' discipline in Kwara State basic schools, Nigeria?; 3) What is the level of teachers' knowledge in Kwara State basic schools, Nigeria?; and 4) What is the level of teachers' skills in Kwara State basic schools, Nigeria?

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

The study was carried out to assess teachers' dedication, discipline, knowledge and skills in Kwara State basic schools, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive research design of survey type. The population of the study comprised all the 1,591 head teachers, 3,907 assistant head teachers; and 440 principals, 1,112 vice principals and all the students in Kwara State lower and upper basic schools respectively. Multi-stage sampling technique was used for the study. Cluster sampling technique was used to group the Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the State into senatorial districts, while random sampling technique was used to select two LGAs from each of the senatorial districts (Kwara central, Asa and Ilorin West; Kwara South, Isin and Ekiti; and Kwara North, Moro and Kaima) to make a total of 6, out of the entire 16 in the State. Stratified sampling technique was used to group the Kwara State basic schools into lower (pre-basic to basic six) and upper (basic seven to basic nine), while random sampling technique was used to select five lower and upper basic schools from each of the sampled LGAs. All the 30 head teachers, 78 assistant head teachers, 30 principals and 71 vice principals in the 60 sampled schools were purposively selected to make a total 209. This because they were in the proper position to assess teachers under them based on the variables (dedication, discipline, knowledge and skills) considered in the study. Random sampling technique was also used to select 20 basic nine students from each of the sampled upper basic schools to make a total of 120. The students were selected because they were at the final level of the basic education, and as such considered

mature enough to assess their teachers based on the measures used in the study. Out of the 329 copies of the questionnaire distributed, only 306 copies were retrieved and used for data analysis.

Researcher-designed questionnaire entitled Assessment of Teachers' Dedication, Discipline, Skills and Knowledge Questionnaire (ATDDKSQ) was used to collect data from the respondents for the study. The instrument had four sections consisting of 20 items. Items 1-10 had response options of: Always So (AS), Often So (OS), Rarely So (RS) and Never So (NS), while items 11-20 had response options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The ATDDKSQ was validated by three experts in the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. Twenty copies of the instrument were administered to some respondents outside the study sample and with the use of Cronbach's Alpha, reliability coefficient of 0.80 was found. This proved that the instrument was reliable to be used for the study. Descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions, while the mean scores (0.00-1.66 = Low, 1.67-3.32 = Average, 3.33-5.00 = High) were used as the benchmark for determining the level of teachers' dedication, discipline, knowledge and skills.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Research Question 1: What is the level of teachers' dedication in Kwara State basic schools, Nigeria?

As shown in Table 1, items 1, 3 and 5 (teachers regularly prepare their lesson notes, teachers always ensure the learners have a better understanding of the concept taught and teachers pay attention to difficulties hindering learners to effectively learn) had mean scores of 2.84, 2.67 and 2.48 respectively, and as such regarded as average. Items 2 and 4 (teachers go to classrooms at the right time and teachers keep detailed records of the learners) also had mean scores of 3.59 and 3.73 respectively, and classified as high. Therefore, with the grand mean score of 3.06, the level of teachers' dedication in Kwara State basic schools, Nigeria was declared average. This means that dedication of teachers in Kwara State basic schools, Nigeria is not encouraging enough and there is need for improvement to enhance their effective service delivery which would enhance realisation of the stated goals. This finding agrees with the finding of [23] that the level of teachers' dedication in basic schools in Asa Local Government Area, Kwara State was average. Hence, there is need for teachers to improve on it to facilitate their effective services delivery which would enhance students' academic performance.

Table 1. Level of teachers' dedication in Kwara state basic schools, Nigeria

S/N	Items	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1.	Teachers regularly prepare their lesson notes	306	2.84	1.01	Average
2.	Teachers go to classrooms at the right time	306	3.59	1.71	High
3.	Teachers always ensure learners have a better understanding of the concept taught	306	2.67	0.82	Average
4.	Teachers keep detailed records of learners	306	3.37	0.49	High
5.	Teachers pay attention to difficulties hindering learners to effectively	306	2.48	0.66	Average

Key: Mean: 0.00-1.66 = Low, 1.67-3.32 = Average, 3.33-5.00 = High

#### 3.2. Research Question 2: What is the level of teachers' discipline in Kwara State basic schools, Nigeria?

As shown in Table 2, items 1, 2 and 4 (teachers come to school at the right time, teachers sneak out of school before the closing time, and teachers do not bully learners) had mean scores of 2.47, 2.83 and 1.82 respectively, and as such regarded as average; while items 3 and 5 (teachers dress modestly to school and teachers do not engage in any immoral act with learners) also had mean scores of 3.75 and 3.91 respectively and classified as high. Therefore, with the grand mean score of 2.96, the level of teachers' discipline in Kwara State basic schools, Nigeria was considered average. This depicts that there is still room for improvement in the teachers' discipline in Kwara State basic schools, Nigeria. Average level of the teachers' discipline is not good enough to enhance their total adherence to the ethics of teaching profession which would eventually facilitate their effective job performance, needed to harness students' academic performance. This finding corroborates the view of [8] that indiscipline such as absenteeism from school, lateness, sexual immorality, absconding, involvement in examination malpractices, illegal collection from parents and students, unapproved study leave with pay, drinking and drug abuse has been very alarming among teachers in public basic schools in Nigeria. This is an indication that discipline among teachers at this level of education is not adequate and unless the situation is well addressed, it could affect realisation of the stated goals.

Table 2. Level of teachers' discipline in Kwara state basic schools, Nigeria

S/N	Items	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1.	Teachers come to school at the right time	306	2.47	0.69	Average
2.	Teachers sneak out of school before the closing time	306	2.83	0.72	Average
3.	Teachers dress modestly to school	306	3.75	1.22	High
4.	Teachers do not bully learners	306	1.82	0.65	Average
5.	Teachers do not engage in immoral act	306	3.91	1.34	High

Key: Mean: 0.00-1.66 = Low, 1.67-3.32 = Average, 3.33-5.00= High

### 3.3. Research Question 3: What is the level of teachers' knowledge in in Kwara State basic schools?

As shown in Table 3, items 1, 2, 3 4 and 5 (teachers have adequate knowledge of the subjects taught, teachers have sufficient understanding of learners' differences, teachers use suitable methodology to impart knowledge to learners, teachers have adequate knowledge of classroom management and teachers have sufficient understanding of selecting appropriate instructional resources to complement teaching) had mean scores of 2.53, 1.98, 2.67, 2.44 and 2.60 respectively. Therefore, with the grand mean score of 2.44, the level of teachers' skills in Kwara State basic schools, Nigeria was considered as average. This implies that there is need for teachers in Kwara State basic schools, Nigeria to acquire more knowledge to facilitate their effective job performance which would consequently help in enhancing students' academic performance. This finding supports the finding of [24] that knowledge of basic school teachers in Ijumu Local Government Area, Kogi State was average. As it stands, teachers need to possess adequate knowledge, if actualization of the Universal basic Education goals is of priority.

Table 3. Level of teachers' knowledge in Kwara state basic schools

S/N	Items	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1.	Teachers have adequate knowledge of subjects taught	306	2.53	0.46	Average
2.	Teachers have sufficient understanding of learners' differences	306	1.98	0.30	Average
3.	Teachers use suitable methodology to impart knowledge to learners	306	2.67	0.72	Average
4.	Teachers have adequate knowledge of classroom management	306	2.44	0.41	Average
5.	Teachers have sufficient understanding of selecting appropriate instructional resources to complement teaching	306	2.60	0.52	Average

Key: Mean: 0.00-1.66 = Low, 1.67-3.32 = Average, 3.33-5.00= High

### 3.4. Research Question 3: What is the level of teachers' skills in in Kwara State basic schools?

As shown in Table 4, items 1, 2, 3 and 5 (teachers possess good communication skill, teachers have good interpersonal skill, teachers possess good time management skill and teachers possess skill to properly assess learners) had mean scores of 3.20, 3.27, 2.59 and 2.41 respectively, and as such regarded as average; while item 4 (teachers have the skill to manage disciplinary issues among learners) also had a mean score of 3.73, and considered high. Therefore, with the grand mean score of 3.04, the level of teachers' skills in Kwara State basic schools was declared average. This implies that the skills possessed by teachers in basic schools in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State need improvement to upscale the effectiveness of their job performance and consequently improve the quality of the outputs from the these schools. This finding agrees with the view of [25] that the level of teachers' skills in Oyun Local Area, Kwara State was average. He added that one of the ways of addressing the problem of poor students' academic performance in basic schools in Nigeria is by improving the teachers' teaching skills.

Table 4. Level of teachers' skills in Kwara state basic schools

S/N	Items	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remarks
1.	Teachers possess good communication skill	306	3.20	0.86	Average
2.	Teachers have good interpersonal skill	306	3.27	0.95	Average
3.	Teachers possess good time management skill	306	2.59	0.63	Average
4.	Teachers have the skill to manage disciplinary issues among learners	306	3.37	1.31	High
5.	Teachers possess skill to properly assess learners	306	2.41	0.55	Average

Key: Mean: 0.00-1.66 = Low, 1.67-3.32 = Average, 3.33-5.00= High

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that teacher in Kwara State basic schools, Nigeria should be more dedicated to their job by regularly preparing their lesson notes, going to the classrooms at the right time, ensuring that learners have a better understanding of the concept taught, keeping detailed records of learners and paying attention to difficulties hindering learners to effectively learn. Teachers should increase the level of their discipline by going to school at the right time, not sneaking out of school before the closing time, dressing modestly to school, totally desisting from bullying learners and shunning any engagement in immoral acts with the learners.

Government should be highly committed to the provision of regular and periodic capacity building programmes for teachers through seminar, conference, workshop and lectures to improve their knowledge in the subjects taught, understanding of learners' differences, utilisation of suitable methodology to impart knowledge to learners, classroom management and selection of appropriate instructional resources to complement teaching to facilitate effective learning. Government should also intensify efforts in the provision of regular and periodic professional development programmes for teachers via conferences, seminars, workshops and lectures to increase their skills in communication, relationship with learners, time management, assessment of learners and management of disciplinary issues to enhance students' academic performance. This study used Kwara State Colleges of Education as its locale. Other researchers could also venture into their own researches, focusing on private Colleges of Education in the State, public Colleges of Education in other states or in a geo-political zone in Nigeria.

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