

**TEACHER PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE AS  
CORRELATES OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG STUDENTS  
IN UPPER BASIC SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES IN DELTA STATE,  
NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*This paper was designed to determine the extent to which there could be a linear relationship between teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and academic performance among students in Upper Basic School Social Studies in Delta States. The study attempts to clarify the assumption that the classroom teachers' inability to implement the thematically structure of the Social Studies curriculum is due to lack of competence in pedagogical content knowledge with implication on academic performance among student have not been examined sufficiently in Delta State. Hence, it was the objective of this paper to establish the extent to which this effect could be understood. The pedagogical theory was adopted to guide the study. The theory postulates how things should be taught and/or how one can bring someone to learn. The study employed the secondary data approach to carry out this investigation. It sought to review existing empirical study and literature to determine how the correlate could be established. Finding of the study indicates that there is existing relationship between pedagogical content knowledge of teacher and academic performance among students in the subject area at that level. The paper concludes that academic performance would not be enhanced except there are teachers in the subject area with competence in pedagogical content knowledge. Economic waste will be inevitable when learning outcome is not commensurate with investment on education. Therefore it was recommended among others that government should supply the schools with teachers that can demonstrate competence in pedagogical content knowledge.*

**Keywords:** Teacher, Pedagogical, Content, Knowledge, Academic performance, Social Studies

Teachers are considered as the most important element in the educational sector. They are the unarguably the driver of a nation's education. Economic waste will be inevitable when learning outcome is not commensurate with investment on

education. Many variables may be liable for students' academic performance in a school subject such as Social Studies. But it appears none can replace the role of the teacher whose major responsibility is to among others, implement the contents of a school curriculum. Except there are teachers with pedagogical content knowledge in the subject area, enhanced and improved academic performance among students cannot be guaranteed. While parents heavily contribute to the investment on education of their children through the payment of fees specifically in private schools, it is expected that learning outcome would correspond with such enormous investment.

There is an assumption muted by the author that this paper attempts to clarify. He assumes that classroom teachers' inability to implement the thematic structure of the Social Studies curriculum is due to lack of competence in pedagogical content knowledge. The implication of the above assumption is that the learning of Social Studies will be ineffective with the long run effect in the performance of students in their test scores. The peculiar nature of Social Studies education at the Upper Basic schools requires that the teacher in the subject area would demonstrate ability in the subjects' contents, facts, theories and principles with the relevant pedagogical approaches. Fan, Usoroh and Umoetok (2012) found that Social Studies as an innovative concept has an eclectic field involving the arts, sciences, technology and social sciences. They are of the view that to be a successful teacher in the

subject-area, the teacher would need to orientate himself towards seeing Social Studies as a man in his environment concerned with the problem of human survival irrespective of the inevitable changing life situation and as a way of life which gives man citizenship education. The above observation signals the fact that without competence in pedagogy there will be difficulty faced by teachers. It is against this background the paper investigated the pedagogical content knowledge of the teacher as a correlates of academic performance among students in Upper Basic School Social Studies.

The perceived dichotomy existing between teachers' role in the teaching/learning of the subject and its effects on academic performance among students in the subject area has not been examined sufficiently, hence it was the objective of the author to establish the extent to which this effect could be understood. The pedagogical theory was adopted to guide the study. The theory postulates how Social Studies contents should be taught so that teachers could bring their students to learn. The study employed the secondary data approach to carry out this investigation. It sought to review existing empirical study and literature to determine how the correlates could be established.

### **Investing in Education and Students Academic Performance**

Investing in the education of children is a worthy economic investment. The public-private partnership on education has made education a

competitive aspect of the Nigerian economy. Despite the fact that there has been a dwindling economy in the country, commercialization of education seems to have helped parents cope with it because of the values education potentially provide the individual and society. Commercialization implies the process of managing or running something principally for financial gain. This idea is applied to education service providers in a country that allows the privatization of certain aspects of her education. Conceptually, Hogan and Thompson (2017) described the term to mean “the creation, marketing, and sale of education goods and services to schools by for – profit providers”. The underlining concept of the term suggests that in most part, education is not free. This connotation agreed with Swapnali (2016). He found that there is sale of services or profit motive behind imparting of education or funds are mainly from the receivers of education. It is this idea that led to the conception that there is commercialization of education.

Those who fund the education that they receive consider it a worthwhile investment. According to Agabi (2012), “Education is an investment rather than a social service”. He further observed as follows:

Education is a service sector because it is designed to produce educated men and women who will contribute to the labour market and ultimately the economy. Given that it is responsible for the development of human resources in any economy, investment in education is

tantamount to investment in human capital formation. Investing in education can take many forms including the establishment and management of schools as a business venture and/or the acquisition of any particular type of education by individuals to enhance their employment prospects and income earning capacity (p.4).

Two levels of investment on education were identified in the study by Agabi. They consists of those involved in providing education services or sale of services by establishing and managing a school. The other level are the receivers of education who are made to pay for the services received in form of teaching, use of facilities, quality teachers among others. In other words both levels are involved in education investments for the overall interest and gain that education brings.

#### **Education and Dwindling Economy**

Government at all levels remain the highest provider of education services in any country and Nigeria is not an exception. During a dwindling economy, cut in budget could often truncate the sale of services in education. The above observation aligned with the study by Bamigboye, Ede and Adeyemi (2016). They found that economic crisis confronting many governments has led to the reduction of their budget deficits on education in order to avoid excess indebtedness. They are of the view that the sector in Nigeria has witnessed its fair share of budget cuts in education leading to different consequence on the sector. Teachers, students and families are listed in the chain of the effects resulting in a

dwindling economy. According to their findings, they discovered that teachers' pay is affected. Due to cuts in budget most states in Nigeria would not pay teachers' salary regularly. Teachers' job satisfaction is impeded with a direct effect on their job performance. The outcome of their study conducted in Southwest Nigeria indicates that there is an impact of economic crisis on education curriculum delivery. And also that an economic crisis has affected all aspects of education delivery, with its implication in teachers' involvement in the process.

### **Teachers and Education Delivery in a Dwindling Economy**

Teachers at all levels of education appear to be at the center of the theory and practice of the education system in countries around the world. This is because, education is the delivery of knowledge, skills, and information from teachers to students. According to Sean (2017), "education is not simply a content delivery system; rather, it is a system designed to help all children reach their full potential and enter society as full and productive citizens". The education of every child begins with the family. The home they come from is the first socialization context before the child comes to school. It means that parents have a vital role in the acquisition of basic knowledge and skill that form prerequisite knowledge that the child comes with to school. However, it is the teacher that has the training and expertise in pedagogical competences that can help the child to discover the potential he requires to

succeed in life and be able to meaningfully contribute to the development of the society. Training in Social Studies education prepares teachers to participate in the education delivery by helping the system designed the type of education that will help all the children reach their full potential and enter society as full and productive citizen.

Effective participation of teachers in the delivery of quality education is determined by a number of factors. It ranges from the economic factor to the social standing of the teacher in modern society in Nigeria. A study in Kenya by Warui (2013) found that teachers' effectiveness in productivity was impaired and affected by the remuneration levels, among other factors which hindered the capacity of the teachers to be effective in terms of delivering their professional obligations and mandates to the letter. Another study conducted in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria by Onyekuru and Ibegbunam (2013) found that teacher effectiveness of teachers in the study area was below average. This result could be expected where teachers are owed salaries protractedly. Britton and Propper (2015) report that, "a ten percent shock to the wage gap between local labour market and teacher wages results in an average loss of around 2% in average school performance in the key exams taken at the end of compulsory schooling in England". The implication is that lack of motivation for teachers is capable to affect their effectiveness and it could result in low performance of students in test scores.

### **Social Studies Teacher, Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Academic Performance**

The teacher is centered to the actualization of the general objective of the Social Studies programme in Nigeria. The global purpose of Social Studies is to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. Expansion of this concept allows national government through their policy on education to establish the goal for adopting the discipline in their school curriculum. This idea was supported in the work by Ocadiz (2018). According to her Social Studies provides a paradigm in society for young adult. She shows that:

Social Studies education develops right from kindergarten and into high schools to help students understand their place in the world. Social Studies teaches children their roles and responsibilities particularly in relation to social and civic affairs. It helps students develop critical thinking abilities, prepares them to participate competently and productively as concerned citizens and teaches them to address societal and global concerns using literature, technology and other identifiable community resources (p.1).

The goals and objective identified above have been localized in Africa and Nigeria in particular for teachers to implement, using appropriate approaches.

Educators and experts including Jekayinfa (2011) found that Social Studies education has the appropriate objective aimed at achieving the over-all philosophy

and objectives of education in Nigeria. This is because, the orientation in Social Studies leads to the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society as well as the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competence both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of his society. In this regard, Onuoha and Okam (2011) charge teachers to manipulate the environment of the learners in such a way that their likelihood of acquiring certain specific behaviours is increased. According to Ashley (2016), such environment engages students in learning. Hence pedagogical content knowledge among teachers in the subject matter cannot be overstressed.

Pedagogical content knowledge is a quality in the teaching profession that is linked to enhanced and improved learning outcome of learners. In competence in the use of advanced and innovative instructional methods for teaching and learning of Social Studies have been blamed for poor performance of students at external and internal examinations in many states including Delta State Upper Basic School in Nigeria. A case study of the poor academic performance of candidates for four academic sessions was found appalling in Delta State. The Delta State Post Primary Management Board presented the following data in the following report:

**Table 1: Analysis of Academic Performance in Eternal Examination in Basic Education Certificate in Social Studies in Delta State, Nigeria**

S/N	Subject	Type of Exam	Year of Exam	Performance	Remark
1.	Social Studies	Basic Education Certificate	2013/2014	50%	Average
2.	Social Studies	Basic Education Certificate	2014/2015	46%	Below average
3.	Social Studies	Basic Education Certificate	2015/2016	45%	Below average
4.	Social Studies	Basic Education Certificate	2016/2017	51%	Above average

**Source: Post Primary Management Board, Asaba (2018)**

From the data presented above, the mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) score performance for the subject in the year under review consists of 48%. This result indicates that for the period of four years the average performance among candidates at the Basic Education Certificate Examination have been 48%. The implication is that teacher pedagogical content knowledge in Social Studies education at the Upper Basic School in Delta State negatively affects the academic performance of learner. The result also points to the fact that lack of competent innovative teaching method in the delivery of Social Studies education content create the gap between teaching and learning outcome as demonstrated by low performance in the subject – matter by candidates. This finding is supported in the study by Jacobson (2012). He investigated the influence of teacher’s competence on students’ academic performance in Senior

Secondary Chemistry involving 6 selected secondary schools in Tai Local Government Area of Rivers State. The survey produced 200 students, 20 teachers and 6 principals who responded to a – Teachers Competence Questionnaire (TCQ) Chemistry Achievement Test (CAT) and School Principal Questionnaire were used to generate the appropriate data and the data generated were subsequently subjected to analysis using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and t-test. Results revealed that there is significant relationship between teachers’ competence and students’ academic performance in Chemistry. This finding attests to the fact that pedagogical content knowledge which entail the use of method for instruction is vital if teachers of subject matters especially Social Studies would influence improved academic performance among learners.

Despite the important role of Social Studies in realizing the goal of education in Nigeria, teachers have found it difficult to raise the performance in test score among students because they insist on the conventional method such as lecture method that alienate students from the learning process. The convenience in the use of such methods makes instruction to deviate from student-centered to teacher-centered method. Whereas, Olugbade, Adekomi and Sofowora (2016) found that innovative teacher strategies are the most effective learning platforms. Mahajan and

Kaushal (2017) agreed that interactive learning create a more engaging classroom setting compared to the traditional didactic lecturing methods.

### **Conclusion**

The effect of a dwindling economy may account for the lack of motivation for many teachers to put their best in the development of learners. Impact of such phenomena is shown in the academic performance of learner. Although, a significant variable noticed in this paper was that most teachers lack competence in pedagogical content knowledge in the delivery of Social Studies education at the Upper Basic School in Delta State. Findings indicate that consistent use of traditional didactic lecturing methods for instruction in Social Studies cannot create interactive learning which make learning student centered. The low percentage of 48% performance in four years of teaching and learning of Social Studies in the state is an indication that majority of teachers lack pedagogical content knowledge. Therefore the paper concludes that academic performance would not be enhanced except there are teachers in the subject area which demonstrate competence in pedagogical content knowledge. Hence there is a significant relationship between teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and academic performance among students in Upper Basic School Social Studies in Delta State, Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

The paper recommends as follows that:

1. Government should motivate teachers by paying their salary regularly and promptly. Teachers are made to suffer protracted delay of their salary because of cuts in budget during a dwindling economy. This action on the part of government could contribute to ineffective and inefficient in the teaching and learning of Social Studies with the effect on students' academic performance.
2. a teacher who demonstrates pedagogical content knowledge should be made to teach Social Studies at the Upper Basic Schools. This will make delivery of instruction utilize interactive learning innovative strategies found to create a more engaging classroom setting compared to the traditional didactic lecturing method that does not promote improved academic performance among students.

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