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#### ACCEPTANCE OF ARTICLE FOR PUBLICATION

I hereby inform you that your paper entitled : **“ Teachers’ Disposition and Refletive Practice AS Correlates of Students’ Performance in Social Studies in Yenegoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria”**, is accepted for publication in our “ Revue Internationale de Recherche en Communication, Education et Développement ( RIRCED) : Volume 1, Number 5, ISSN1840 – 6408 of August 2014, edited by Prof. Cyriaque C. S. AHODEKON & Dr. Julien K. GBAGUIDI which will be published by Institut Universitaire Panafricain (IUP) at Porto-Novo in Republic of Benin soonest.

We look forward to getting more articles from you.

Yours sincerely,

**Dr. Julien Koffi GBAGUIDI**  
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# Teachers' Disposition and Reflective Practice as Correlates of Students' Performance in Social Studies in Yenagoa Metropolis, Bayelsa State

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## Abstract

*The study examined teachers' disposition and reflective practice as a correlate of students' performance in social studies in Yenagoa Metropolis, Bayelsa State. Descriptive survey research of the correlational type was adopted for the study. 701 Junior Secondary School III students were randomly selected for the study. A researchers' designed Questionnaire on Teachers' Characteristics (QTC) and an adopted Social Studies Performance Test (SSPT) from the Bayelsa State Basic Junior School Certificate Examination 2008, 2009 and 2010 past questions were the instruments used in collecting data for the study. The QTC and SSPT was pilot-tested using test-retest and split half methods respectively. A reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained for the QTC while 0.74 reliability coefficient was obtained for SSPT. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to analyze the data at a significance level of 0.05. The results showed no correlation between teachers' disposition and students' performance in Social Studies while there was a correlation between teachers' reflective practice and students' performance in Social Studies. The study therefore recommended that Faculties of Education in Nigerian Universities, Colleges of Education as well as Institutes of Education should incorporate reflective practice into their teacher education programmes if the purpose of graduating quality teachers that will turn promote students' performance is to be realized.*

**Keywords:** teachers' disposition, reflective practice, correlate, students' performance and social studies.

## Introduction

In many studies, the definition of disposition revolves around competency-based, morality-based, classroom management techniques and personality traits that affect learning (Carr, 2007; Wilkerson & Lang, 2011;). For instance, Schulte, Edick, Edwards and Mackiel (2004) contended that dispositions are patterns of behaviour frequently exhibited in the absence of coercion,, This constitutes a habit of mind under some conscious and voluntary control, and that is intentional and oriented to broad goals. Probably that is why Cudahy, Finnan, Jaruszewicz and McCarthy

(2002) posit that dispositions are commitments and values including teaching ethics that are internally held and externally exhibited.

Similarly, Thompson, Ransdell and Rousseau (2005) opined that dispositions as perceptions or beliefs that guide actions. There are several key elements according to (Schulte et al.) 2004, that indicate teachers' dispositions. He contended that these included learned qualities, caring attitude, habits of mind, ways of behaving, sensitivity to student differences, dedication to their duties and commitment to teaching. In other words, effective teachers are not only defined by their quantifiable and tangible traits like qualification, certification, experience, gender, preparation programme and age. It also includes by their intangible personality traits that influence students' performance and achievement. In this connection, Pacis and Weegar (2011) have argued that "a quality teacher possesses the intangible attributes of ethical behaviours that are easily recognizable and obvious. These behaviours, each called a disposition, include kindness, caring and having a high expectation for students and teachers."

It is on this basis that the study concerns itself with the teachers' personality traits that are indicative of disposition. Thus, operationally, teachers' dispositions are those personality traits and behavioural patterns that individual teacher displays directly or indirectly and upon which students' learning outcomes are affected either positively or negatively. Callahan (1966) defines personality as the dynamic organization of those traits and characteristics patterns of behaviour that are unique to the individual. He stated further that a teacher whose personality helps create and maintain a friendly and conducive classroom in which learners feel safe and motivated to learn is said to have desirable teaching personality. On the other hand, Lew (1977) define a trait as "a simple behavioural pattern-a disposition or tendency to behave in a describable way. In other words, a trait is more generalized than habit, dynamic and determinative in behaviour. Also,

according to Callahan (1966), the trait may be observed in the light of the personality that contains it or in its distribution in the population as a whole. Similarly, Onwuka (1996) argues that the personality of the teacher is a very determining factor in the teaching process and methods. Accordingly, he argued further that teacher temperaments, convictions about the human nature, and what they consider to be the purpose of education determine their classroom methods. It is evident in the assertion made by Stronge (2002) that much of the recent research on teacher effectiveness focuses on relating teacher behaviours to students' achievement.

Similarly, the adverb reflectivity is derived from the verb 'reflect' which means "to think carefully, especially about possibilities and opinions (Cambridge University Press, 2005). For Akbari and Allvar (2010), the mere meaning of reflection is stepping back and thinking about one's actions or thoughts. Though there exist little empirical research results linking teacher reflectivity with student academic performance but a close look at the literature of reflective teaching provides us a good theoretical understanding of the concept. Schon (1987) describes reflection as a way a teacher present and deal with problems of practice and allow the self to be more open to different possibilities during the process of presenting teaching problems. Moreover, then put those issues in context so as to discover actions to improve the situation.

According to Schon (1987) there are two types of reflection. The first type called areflection on action usually takes place on a teaching/learning situation to allow for mental reconstruction and analysis of the actions and events. The second type of reflection called, reflection in action exists during the act of teaching, and it entails interpreting, analyzing, and providing solutions to complex situations in the classroom.

What this means is that teacher reflectivity is a careful review or self-examination of and thoughtfulness about one's teaching process, Stronge (2002). Put in another perspective, teacher

reflectivity is the act by which the teacher judges or questions him/herself whether what he has done in the classroom is realistic enough to enhance students' learning and performance. Teacher's reflective practice has been found to help free teachers from both impulsive and routine behaviour and method that is not incongruent with professional practice (Goldhaber, 2002; Sanders, 2000). To Farrel (2003), reflection provides the means for teachers to build their teaching experiences, allows them to act in a deliberate critical and international manner, increases their awareness of teaching, enables deeper understanding, and triggers positive change. The point of emphasis here is that in reflective practice, teachers see themselves as students of learning. Teachers always improve lessons, think about how to reach particular children, and made use of new approaches in the classroom to meet the needs of the learners. In other words, by engaging in reflection, teachers become better observers of classroom behaviour that create and stimulates an awareness of their teaching decisions and the reasons behind those decisions. As teachers begin to understand the motivation for their intuitive decision, their practices become increasingly explicit (Nolan and Huebner, 1989; Stronge, 2002).

Another benefit of reflective practice is that it enables teachers to assess their teaching because they want to be improved teachers and to make a difference in the lives of students. Reflective practice no doubt helps to shape teachers' classroom approach and to reduce their over-reliance on traditional practices, particularly when such practices are not yielding or producing the desired educational outcomes – students' performance/achievement. The implication of this is that teachers tend to replace these old and traditional practices thereby making them to be not only consumers of knowledge, but also producers of new knowledge (LaBoskey, 1994). It should also be noted that reflection advances teachers' level of intellect, and his ability to readily accept the constructive criticism that ultimately provides the needed feedback for teaching improvement.

Besides the impact reflectivity has on teachers, research has also proved its effect on students' performance. For example, Akbari and Allvar (2010), Nolan and Heubner (1989) contended that, as teachers are more aware of reflective practices, they begin to exhibit reflective behaviour for their students. Again, teachers' engagement in reflective teaching promotes students ability to be critically reflective. Stronge (2002) also opined that, in the attempt of improving their capacity to have an enhance student learning, these teachers readily welcome constructive criticism and reflect upon it. He argued further that initially, thereflective practice can create confusion for the teacher; the process requires honesty, open-mindedness, and sufficient time to change teachingbehaviours.

Clearly, Stronge (2002) reported some findings on the value of reflective practices to include:

- a. Teachers may reflect on their work formally or informally; for example, they may review a day's work mentally, keep a journal or portfolio, meet regularly with a mentor or with colleagues, or assess a videotaped recording of their teaching. Regardless of the mode, the key is reflection.
- b. Teachers whose students have high achievement rates constantly mention reflection of their duties as an important component of improving their teaching.
- c. Belief in one's efficacy and maintaining high expectations for students are common among teachers who reflect (p. 8).

Similarly, in a recent study by Akbar and Allvar (2010) a high correlation between teacher reflectivity and student achievement outcomes was reported. This report was closely related to Waltermire's (1999) argument that:

Reflective practice is, first and foremost, centered on student learning and a commitment of helping students succeed. Reflective teachers seem interested in growing and learning but not for learning's sake or necessarily for increased pedagogical skills except as it may help a student. Thus, they are always searching for new ideas and techniques. Reflective practice starts with a passion for wanting to help children succeed. These teachers are constantly puzzling over what works and what doesn't work in order to help children learn. Their reflection is

In a nutshell, this study is intended to provide some empirical research result that will link teacher reflective practice and students' performance.

Performance means how well or how badly a person achieves in a particular task assigned to him/her. Performance can also be defined as the observable and measurable behaviour of a person in a particular situation usually experimental situation (Yusuf, 2002). The performance of students is determined by conducting a performance test on the students concerned. In the teaching-learning process in particular and education in general, students' academic performance is one of the important indicators of education quality. Thus, education policy makers, researchers and education practitioners are spending sleepless nights seeking for ways to consolidate or improve the overall performance of pupils and students across the levels of the school system. Little wonder, advancement from one level to another level within the school system is solely measured or based on students' performance/achievement in tests examinations. Obviously, students' performance is determined by the degree of learning outcomes in terms of scores and grades recorded against a student in a particular or series of school subjects. On this basis, what can we say is students' performance? According to Opasola (2009) students' academic performance is the process whereby students' educational activities are measured by examination within the content of a curriculum. The central point to note from Opasola's definition is that, academic performance or achievement is a reflection of the students' total learning experiences

drawn from the instructional objectives presented during the classroom interaction. This construct is more often than not, interchangeably used to connote students' academic achievement or learning outcomes.

This categorization is made possible by the use of tests, internal or external (standardized or state) examinations like the Basic Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination (BJSCE).

For example, the table below shows the trend of the performance of students in Social Studies in the Junior School Certificate Examination (JSSCE) in Yenagoa Local Government Area for 2006 – 2010.

**Table 1. The Trend of Performance of Students in Social Studies in BJSCE in Yenagoa Local Government Area for 2006 – 2010**

Year	No. of Schools	Candidates Examined	A		C		P		F	
				%		%		%		%
2006	32	3380	16	(0.47)	600	(17.75)	2231	(66.05)	533	(15.77)
2007	34	3612	8	(0.22)	458	(12.68)	2334	(64.62)	812	(22.48)
2008	36	3983	2	(0.05)	425	(10.67)	3259	(81.82)	297	(7.46)
2009	43	4699	2	(0.04)	420	(8.94)	3734	(79.46)	543	(11.56)
2010	58	5452	5	(0.09)	331	(6.07)	2077	(38.09)	3039	(55.74)

Source: Bayelsa State Ministry of Education, Yenagoa (2011).

It can be observed from Table 1 that there is a clear mark of fluctuation in the performance of students in Social Studies and several factors may have accounted for this trend.

The performance of students in both internal and external examinations is usually sent to schools as feedback indicating what teachers and students should do to improve on future performance (Yara & Manjohi, 2011). Against this background, the poor and fluctuating performance of students in the core of Mathematics, English including Social Studies subjects in the Upper Basic



Schools has been reported to have strong link to teachers attributes or variables (Adeniyi, 2009; Akiri & Ugborugbo, 2009; Sotoyinbo, 2009;).

Given the fluctuating performance of students in the Basic Junior School Certificate Examination (BJSCE) Social Studies in Bayelsa State in recent years, there has been in recent times, a growing body of research which indicates that students' performance is more heavily influenced by teachers' characteristics or quality than the students' prior academic record, students' race or parents' level of educational attainment. Unfortunately, the previous studies of Abuseji (2007), Adeniyi (2009), Emmanuel (2010), Ibe and Maduabum (2001), Opasola (2009), Oladele (2010), Raheem (2010), Sotoyinbo (2009), Yara and Manjohi (2011) who at various times investigated into Student other teacher-related variables as determinants of Secondary school students' achievement in biology, social studies, Christian religious studies, economics, chemistry and mathematics respectively, did not capture the teachers' characteristic of disposition and reflective practice.

Therefore, the problem of the study is to examine teachers' disposition and reflective practice as a correlate of students' performance in social studies in Yenagoa metropolis, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

1. Do teachers' dispositions correlate with students' performance in Junior Secondary School Social Studies?
2. Does teachers' reflective practice correlate with students' performance in Junior Secondary School Social Studies?

### **Methodology**

The Correlational research type was adopted for the study. This design is considered appropriate for the study because it will enable the researcher to correlate teachers' characteristics with Students Performance in Junior Secondary School Social Studies, through the use of questionnaires and a performance test respectively.

The study covers both the public and private Basic Junior Secondary Schools located within the Yenagoa metropolis of Bayelsa State. The study specifically examines teachers' disposition and teachers' reflective practice as correlates of students' performance in Junior Secondary School Social Studies. Basic Junior Secondary School III students participated in the study. Based on the estimated sample size in relation to the population as provided by the Research Advisors (2006), the researcher employed a simple random sampling technique to select 727 students of Upper Basic School III (BJSS III) from 34 schools who participated in the 2011/2012 Basic Junior Secondary Certificate Examination in Yenagoa Metropolis.

The study made use of two instruments – Questionnaire on Teachers' Characteristics (QTC) and a Social Studies Performance Test (SSPT) to examine teachers' disposition and reflective practice as correlate of Junior Secondary School students' performance in Social Studies. Copies of the QTC and SSPT were given to experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Social Sciences Education, University of Ilorin, to establish the face and content validity of the instruments. The QTC and SSPT were pilot-tested using test-retest and split half methods respectively. A reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained for the QTC while 0.74 reliability coefficient was obtained for SSPT. At the end of the administration of the instrument, 701 copies were retrieved. Thus, the data analyzed was based on 701 participants who returned copies of the QTC and SSPT. Lastly, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was employed to analyze the data collected for the study.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** Do teachers' dispositions correlate with students' performance in Junior Secondary School Social Studies?

**Table 2: Table showing the Correlation between Teachers' Disposition and Students' Performance in Junior Secondary School Social Studies**

	SSPT	TD
SSPT	1.000	.000
TD	.000	1.000

Where:

SSPT: Social Studies Performance Test

TD: Teachers' Dispositions

Table 2 shows the correlation between teachers' dispositions and social studies performance test. The findings revealed that teachers' dispositions ( $r = .000$ ) had no correlation with students' performance in the Junior Secondary School Social Studies in Yenagoa metropolis of Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

**Research Question 2:** Does teachers' reflective practice correlate with students' performance in Junior Secondary School Social Studies?

**Table 3: Table showing the Correlation between Teachers' Reflective Practice and Students' Performance in Junior Secondary School Social Studies**

	SSPT	TRP
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<b>SSPT</b>	1.000	.055
<b>TRP</b>	.055	1.000

Where:

SSPT: Social Studies Performance Test

TRP: Teachers' Reflective Practice

Table 3 also showed the correlation between teachers' reflective practice and the social studies performance test. The results showed that teachers' reflective practice ( $r = .055$ ) had a positive relationship with students' performance in the Junior Secondary School Social Studies in Yenagoa metropolis of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The implication of this result is that whether the teacher show positive or negative disposition to students during classroom situation or not; is not likely to negatively affect the performance of students in the Junior Secondary School Social Studies so far as Social Studies teachers regularly engage themselves in reflective practice.

### **Discussion**

On hypotheses research question 1, the result obtained from the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) as shown in Table 2 proved that statistically, there is no correlation between teachers' dispositions and students' performance in this study. This is contrary to the widely held view by many that teachers' disposition is a major denominator in students' performance. Therefore, the submissions of Lew (1977), Murray, Rushton and Paunonen (1990), and Carr (2007) that teachers' classroom behaviours (dispositions) determine students' performance may not be entirely true after all, particularly at the junior secondary school level. Though Murray,

Rushton and Paunonen's submission was based on findings from university psychology students, its applicability on the junior secondary school social studies students is not potent enough in this study. In other words, teachers' dispositions that influence students' performance in one educational level or subject, cannot be said to have the same predicting power in other levels of education or subject areas.

On research question 2, the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient matrix however proved that there is a correlation between teachers' reflective practice and students' performance in social studies. To this end, the result is consistent with the findings of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (1998), Stronge (2002); and Akbar and Allvar (2010). For example, Akbar and Allvar (2010) from their findings maintained that there should be a passionate desire on the part of teachers to transform problematic classroom situations into opportunities for students to learn and grow through their reflective practice.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

It should also be submitted here that even though teachers' disposition does not correlate with students' performance in this study, the import of teachers' dispositions in the classroom situation should not be completely disregarded. The ultimate conclusion, however, is that social studies teachers should consistently engaged themselves in reflective practice. That is if they hope to up and better the performance of students in social studies. Therefore, the following recommendations commend themselves in this study:

- a. Faculties, institutes and colleges of education in Nigeria should as a matter of importance familiarize student teachers with relevant components of reflective practice in their teacher

education programme, if the purpose of graduating quality teachers that will in turn promote students' performance is to be realized.

- b. As the task of reflectivity is demanding, video and audio recording gadgets should be mounted in all classrooms by the management of every school. Also, there should be an in-built system of Students' Assessment of Teachers Report (SATR) to be periodically done by the students themselves. This should be done side-by side with the normal Annual Performance Evaluation Report (APER). The feedback from this assessment will enable teachers adjust where necessary.
- c. There should also be constant supervision and monitoring of teachers by the inspectorate division of State and Federal ministries of education. The supervision and monitoring will no doubt, improve the quality of teaching and learning and by extension, students' performance.
- d. The government should institute Teachers Award (i.e. Local, State and National) system whereby teachers whose students performed excellently in internal and external exams are recognized and rewarded accordingly. With such award system in place teachers at all levels would always strive to influence positively the performances of their students.

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