

## TEACHERS' PROFESSIONALISM AND TASK PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

BY

**Bolaji, Oluwafemi Tajudeen:**

Department of Educational Management & Counselling, Faculty of Education, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin

### Abstract

*The role of teachers' professionalism in job performance cannot be overemphasized as a professional qualification of teachers to enhance their effectiveness in task performance. This study examined teachers' professionalism and task performance in public secondary schools in Kwara state Nigeria. Six (38%) of the 16 Local Government Areas in the State's three Senatorial Districts were chosen using a straightforward random selection technique. Out of the 112 public secondary schools in the chosen Local Government Areas, 50 (44.6%) were chosen at random. A multi-stage sampling process was employed to choose the samples while a descriptive survey research design was applied. The researchers designed a questionnaire titled Teachers' Professionalism and Task Performance Questionnaire (TPTPQ) used to elicit relevant data for the study. The TPTPQ was validated and subjected to reliability test co-efficient of 0.73 & 0.84 for TP and TP, respectively. The findings indicated that teachers' professionalism enhances their task performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State. It was recommended that government should grant teachers a certain amount of autonomy so they can carry out their duties in a way that will increase their productivity and help them do their work honourably. All parties involved in education should pay careful attention to these aspects to improve teacher task performance.*

**Keywords:** *Teachers' professionalism, Job autonomy, Teacher's qualification, Task performance*

### Introduction

Teachers play a crucial role in developing the human capital required for any society's growth as essential actors in the teaching-learning process. Students are given knowledge, information, skills, attitude, beliefs, ideas, and values, which ultimately enable them to contribute to society through a variety of professions. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) emphasized the crucial functions of educators by asserting that no country could surpass the quality of its teachers or surpass the calibre and status of its educational system. According to Opinmi (2014), teachers are significant change agents who, through their management of classroom activities and instruction, bring the educational strategy and objectives to life. Therefore, it is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that extracurricular and curricular activities are appropriately planned and carried out to promote the holistic development of their students. It is important to remember that the effectiveness of a system of education is mostly determined by the performance of the teaching staff. Task performance is an important factor that could have an impact on the achievement of corporate goals and objectives. Many stakeholders in the education sector have grown gravely concerned over the years about the low task performance of teachers in secondary schools in Kwara State.

According to Faremi (2021), a teacher's task performance is demonstrated by, among other things, how well they can teach, manage their classrooms, discipline their students, inspire others, and establish leadership positions within the educational system. Teachers who are knowledgeable in their subjects and effectively develop lesson plans are likely to be better at both teaching and other jobs that are given to them. The ability of teachers to plan, coordinate, control, and manage their instructional activities along with the capacity to control students' behaviour inside and outside of the classroom as well as their dedication to their positions and the accomplishment of their objectives are prerequisites for judging how well a teacher has carried out his or her duties. Education stakeholders have long expressed grave worry

about the perceived or clear lack of effectiveness. Teachers' performance in Kwara State secondary schools has long been a source of intense worry for those involved in education. According to Sule (2013), one of the main reasons for the fall in the nation's educational progress was the secondary school teachers' negative attitude toward their jobs. Subject expertise, lesson planning, and teaching methodology are the indicators of teachers' task performance that will be considered in this study.

In many secondary schools in Kwara state, Nigeria, the teaching task of teachers—which is represented in good topic understanding, competent lesson note preparation, and the use of proper teaching education appear to be subpar. Many secondary school teachers in the state appear to do poorly on their tasks, which may be related to ineffective instruction. The preparation of lesson notes is a very important part of the teaching task for teachers, but the writing of current lesson notes always seems to be a point of contention between the teachers and their principals. Many teachers are utterly unwilling to write their lesson plans, and when they do, they're frequently out-of-date or hastily completed, endangering the achievement of classroom teaching objectives. Some of the teachers appear to have a limited understanding of their fields, which makes for poor instruction in the classroom. In many secondary schools in Kwara State, the use of effective teaching pedagogy appears to be subpar. Failing to effectively handle these issues would undermine the attainment of the aims and objectives secondary schools have set for themselves by the National Policy on Education.

The students' poor academic performance in secondary schools in Kwara State, notably on public exams like the West African School Certificate Examination, appears to have been largely influenced by all these poor teacher characteristics. One of the elements that may affect a teacher's performance is their code of ethics. To sustain the ideals and concepts driving the teaching profession in Nigeria, a teacher's code of ethics serves as the mission statement or the standards of professional conduct and integrity expected of teachers in schools (Asoga-Allen, 2016). By upholding and advancing the highest standards of professional behaviour and conduct in the best interests of teachers, learners/students, and all other stakeholders in the education sector, it seeks to elevate the stature of teaching. According to Maphosa et al. (2015), professional ethics frequently have a favourable link with workers' performance. It seems that some teachers in Kwara State secondary schools have recently displayed unprofessional behaviour. Examples include failing to perform their duties, arriving late for class, skipping class, supporting exam fraud, and engaging in other anti-social activities. These actions are against the ethics of the teaching profession and may put secondary students' performance on a task in danger.

It has been noted that many secondary school teachers in Kwara state do not uphold the code of ethics when doing their jobs. A lot of them appear to be unaware of any codes of ethics that might apply to their line of work. Despite the need from educational stakeholders for secondary school teachers to have a reasonable amount of professional autonomy, the administration appears unconcerned with this demand. Secondary school teachers frequently follow the directives from above. Even when given job autonomy, teachers might not feel secure in their ability to use it without running afoul of the administrator for carrying out an alternative course of action, according to Sehrawat (2014). Therefore, task performance may be subpar when a teacher's employment autonomy is prohibited.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The accomplishment of both short- and long-term educational goals and objectives, and effective task performance by teachers are very important to a school as an organization. As many public secondary schools, particularly those in Kwara State, appear to be having difficulties with teachers' task performance, which is demonstrated through effective topic mastery, lesson preparation, and teaching pedagogy. Creativity, punctuality, intellectual curiosity, initiative, and dedication to work are all qualities that are expected of teachers when they carry out their duties in the classroom. However, many secondary schools in Kwara State don't seem to have them at all, based on observations. Student poor performance in public

exams like the West African Secondary Schools Certificate Examinations, which are administered by the West African Examination Council, is the result of the state's low teacher task performance over a long period. If this perceived issue of poor task performance by teachers is not addressed, it could spell serious trouble for the State's purpose of secondary school education. To better understand teachers' professionalism and task performance, this study focused on public secondary schools in Kwara State.

### Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What is the level of teachers' professionalism in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State
2. What is the level of teachers' task performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State

### Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study.

Ho1: There is no significant joint contribution of teachers' professionalism (teachers' compliance with the code of ethics, teachers' qualifications and teachers' job autonomy) to teachers' task performance in Kwara State public secondary schools.

Ho2: There is no significant relative contribution of teachers' professionalism (teachers' compliance with the code of ethics, teachers' qualification and teachers' job autonomy) to teachers' task performance in Kwara State public secondary schools.

### Review of Related Literature

Extensive studies have been conducted on teachers' professionalism and job performance. Adejumbi and Ojikutu (2013) examined factors including lesson planning, level of job dedication, supervision, and evaluation, among others, that might inform or affect how well teachers accomplish their tasks. Sakyi and Bawole (2009), Al-Siyabi (2016), and Aja-Okorie (2016) examined the difficulties of implementing a code of conduct in the public sector, most administrators take the implementation of an ethics code in their organizations lightly, rendering the practice of codes of conduct among employees—including teachers ineffective. Mabagala (2013) noted that the issue of a code of ethics is more prevalent among secondary school teachers and that it is typically brought on by institutional-related factors, such as poor leadership, lax supervision and monitoring, the "syndrome of leniency," a lack of knowledge about the code, and personal factors. It was concluded that the less effective teachers implement suitable classroom organization, enough lesson preparation, and commitment, the more inconsistent their schools' codes of ethics will be, which could result in subpar task performance. The findings revealed that significant relationship between teachers' success at work and their level of autonomy. Ooslerlink (2013) Siyabi (2016) and Shamina (2016) stated that without autonomy, teachers would be unable to collaborate freely with their pupils and coworkers and fulfil their tasks effectively.

Researchers looked into the relationship between professional education credentials and how well people in the education industry performed their jobs. Researchers Owolabi and Adebayo (2012), Dele-Rotimi and Oyinlana (2014), Akinloye (2014), and Abe and Adu (2013) found that task performance and teachers' (professional) educational qualifications were strongly correlated. While was found by Oluwadamilare (2012), Edu, et al (2012), and Yusuf and Dada (2016), teachers' educational background had little to no influence on how well they performed their assigned tasks. The researcher was able to further investigate these two factors because of the two divergence positions of the examined literature. The majority of this literature examined the impact of teachers' qualifications on students' academic outcomes without considering the teachers' task performance, which serves as the core of this study. Further affirming this statement, Oyekan (2000) and Abe (2014) stated that "a teaching qualification is an academic or professional achievement that qualifies a person as a registered teacher and enables him/her to teach in school."

### Methodology

The study utilized a descriptive survey research methodology, and the samples were chosen for the study using a multi-stage sampling procedure. 3 of the State's 6 educational zones were chosen using a straightforward random sampling process. In addition, 10 out of 20 Local Government Areas inside the sampled zones were chosen using the same sampling technique. A total of 78 schools—30% of the schools in each of the chosen Educational Zones (EZs)—were chosen at random. Additionally, 20% of the teachers (1163) from the three sampled EZs of the State were chosen using the proportionate-to-size sampling technique. The Teachers' Professionalism Questionnaire (TPQ) and Teachers' Task Performance Questionnaire (TTPQ) were used to collect data for the study. The Cronbach alpha technique was used to ascertain reliability coefficients of 0.73 and 0.84 for teachers' professionalism and task performance, respectively. Descriptive statistics of means and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions raised while inferential statistics of multiple regression were used to analyze the hypotheses formulated at a 0.05 level of significance.

**Research Question 1:** What is the level of teachers' professionalism in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State

**Table 1: The level of Teachers' Professionalism in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State**

	VH	H	L	VL	Mean	SD
Compliance with the Code of Ethics	4	3	2	1		
Dress formally to school every day	121 7.76%	187 11.99%	347 22.24%	905 58.01%	1.69	0.11
Avoid the use of abusive language on students	800 51.28%	276 17.69%	225 14.42%	259 16.60%	3.33	0.21
Communicate in comprehensible language with Students	148 9.49%	211 13.53%	485 31.09%	716 45.90%	1.87	0.12
Avoidance of corporal punishment	200 17.20%	293 25.20%	396 34.0%	274 23.60%	2.36	0.20
Avoidance of corrupt practices in school	278 23.90%	112 9.60%	248 21.30%	525 45.10%	2.12	0.18
Avoidance of improper conduct among students of the opposite sex	203 17.50%	122 10.50%	259 22.30%	579 49.80%	1.96	0.17
Adherence to moral codes of the teaching profession	59 5.1%	86 7.4%	388 33.4%	630 54.2%	1.63	0.14
Exhibition of proper conduct within the school	31 2.7%	99 8.5%	210 18.1%	905 77.8%	1.40	0.11
Maintain cordial relationships with students	21 1.8%	83 7.1%	125 10.7%	62 5.3%	2.22	0.76
Maintain cordial relationships with colleagues	39 3.4%	58 5.0%	385 33.1%	619 53.2%	1.57	0.14
Maintain cordial relationship with school administrative staff	128 2.4%	74 6.4%	396 34.0%	274 23.6%	1.82	0.24
					2.0	0.21
<b>Teacher Job Autonomy</b>	VH	H	L	VL	Mean	SD
Good support for teacher's freedom	389 33.4%	99 8.5%	31 2.7%	644 55.4%	2.20	0.19
Responsibility for students' performance	366 31.5%	693 59.6%	21 1.8%	83 7.1%	3.15	0.27
Accountability for teacher's decision making	335 28.8%	781 62.9%	39 3.4%	58 5.0%	3.15	0.26
Involvement in school decision making	368	74	28	693	2.10	0.18

	31.6%	6.4%	2.4%	59.6%		
Interaction with the school administrator	133	288	494	248	2.26	0.19
	11.4%	24.8%	42.5%	21.3%		
Freedom to the personal decision	51	339	578	195	2.21	0.19
	4.4%	29.1%	49.7%	16.8%		
Freedom of control over work	76	260	589	238	2.15	0.18
	6.5%	22.4%	50.6%	20.5%		
Control over curriculum	443	218	201	301	2.69	0.23
	37.3%	18.7%	17.3%	25.3%		
Freedom of interaction with parents of their students	579	28	427	129	2.91	0.25
	49.8%	2.4%	36.7%	11.1%		
Average Weighted Mean					2.21	0.21
Overall Average Mean for Teacher Professionalism					2.10	
VH = Very High      H = High      L = Low      VL = Very Low Remark: Very Low = 0.01-1.99      High = 2.00 – 4.00						

Table 1 shows the professionalism of teachers in secondary schools in Kwara State with a mean score of 1.69, SD=0.11. The results revealed that 95.9% of respondents had low opinions about wearing formal attire to school every day while 4.1% had positive opinions. Except for item 2, which has a high mean of 3.33, SD=0.21) and indicates that the level of professionalism (compliance with code of ethics) is low among the Kwara state secondary school teachers, most of the table's items tend to elicit negative reactions.

Again, the table further illustrates the analysis's findings based on the degree of job autonomy for teachers. The results show that, with a mean score of (2.10, SD=0.18), 62% of respondents believed that their involvement in school decision-making was limited, while 38% disagreed. Similar to the other categories on the table, the autonomy of teachers has low mean scores overall, with a weighted average of 2.21. This suggests that secondary schools in Kwara State have little teacher autonomy. As a result, the level of professionalism among teachers in secondary schools in Kwara State is poor, with a weighted average of 2.10 overall and low weighted averages of 2.0 for adherence to the code of ethics and 2.21 for job autonomy.

**Research Question 2:** What is the level of teachers' task performance in Kwara State secondary schools?

**Table 2** shows the level of teachers' task performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State

S/N	Items	VH4	H3	L2	VL1	Mean	Std. Dev.
Lesson preparation							
1	Timely preparation of lesson plan.	20	7	21	46	2.01	2.41
		21.28%	7.45%	22.34%	48.94%		
2	Timely preparation of scheme of work.	26	7	18	43	2.17	2.31
		27.66%	7.45%	19.15%	45.74%		
3	Timely preparation of the report of activities	14	34	35	11	2.54	2.70
		14.89%	36.17%	37.23%	11.70%		
4	Effective preparation of lesson notes	13	33	42	6	2.56	2.72
		13.83%	35.11%	44.68%	6.38%		
Subject mastery							
1	Demonstrates good teaching skills.	19	35	35	5	2.72	2.89
		20.21%	37.23%	37.23%	5.32%		

2	Explain difficult concept	14 14.89%	33 35.11%	41 43.62%	6 6.38%	2.59	2.76
3	Align instruction with the assignment given	13 13.83%	29 30.85%	43 45.74%	9 9.57%	2.49	2.65
4	Encourage students' participation during the lessons	14 14.89%	34 35.19%	35 37.23%	11 12.68%	2.54	2.70
1	Effective use of instructional materials	8 8.51%	20 21.28%	42 44.68%	24 25.53%	2.13	2.27
2	Effective evaluation of teaching technique	13 13.83%	30 31.91%	39 41.49%	12 12.77%	2.47	2.63
3	Effective classroom interaction	14 14.89%	25 26.60%	41 43.62%	14 14.89%	2.41	2.56
4	Effectiveness of teaching methods	13 13.83%	31 32.98%	39 41.49%	11 11.70%	2.49	2.65
Average Mean						2.42	

VH = Very High H = High L = Low VL = Very Low

Remark: High = 2.00 – 4.00 Low = 0.00-1.99

The level of task performance among teachers in secondary schools in Kwara State is shown in Table 2. The findings reveal that 75.6% (21.8% and 53.8%) of respondents agreed that secondary school teachers rarely prepare lesson plans promptly, whereas 24.6% (20.8% and 3.8%) disagreed (mean =2.01, SD = 2.41). As for the alignment of instruction with assignments given by secondary school teachers, the results show that 56.4% (50.0% and 6.4%) of the respondents agreed that it was low (mean=2.49, SD=2.65), while 43.6% disagreed. According to the results, 74.3% of respondents said that secondary school teachers used instructional resources ineffectively, whereas 25.6% of respondents were found to be using them effectively (mean =2.13, SD = 2.27). A weighted average mean of 2.42 is displayed in the table. This suggests that Kwara State's secondary school teachers do poorly in terms of task performance. This indicates that, in terms of task performance, secondary school teachers in Kwara State are underperforming.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no joint contribution of teachers' professionalism performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State

**Table 4: Joint Contribution of Teachers' Professionalism performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State**

Model		Total Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
R= 0.286 <sup>a</sup>	Regression	14534.752	3	1614.972	11.404	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
R Square=0.082	Residual	162857.523	1150	141.615		
Adjusted R Square= 0.075	Total	177392.275	1159			
Std. The error of the Estimate=11.90022						

As shown in Table 4 above, multiple correlations of 0.286 between independent and dependent variables were found in the table. This suggests that independent variables may have some influence on teachers' task performance, and an R2 of 0.082 indicates that independent variables accounted for 8.2% of the total variance seen in the dependent variable (teachers' task performance), leaving the remaining 91.8% to other factors that were not considered in the statistical analysis. The table also demonstrated that the

integration of all independent variables enabled accurate task performance prediction for teachers ( $F(3,1150) = 11.404, p 0.05$ ). As a result, teachers' professionalism characteristics together significantly contribute to their task performance.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relative contribution of teacher professionalism (teachers' compliance with the code of conduct, teachers' qualifications and teachers' job autonomy) to task performance in Kwara State public secondary schools.

**Table 5:** Relative contributions of teachers' professionalism to task performance in Kwara State public secondary schools

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.745	3.180		0.234	0.000
Compliance with the Code of Ethics	0.008	0.074	0.019	0.110	0.026
Teachers' Autonomy	0.543	0.075	0.240	7.224	0.000
Teachers' qualifications	-0.176	0.195	-0.008	0.902	0.367

The regression analysis coefficient for the relative contributions of teachers' professionalism on their job performance is shown in Table 5. The study's findings showed that, of all the variables considered, job autonomy for teachers ( $\beta = 0.240$ ) had the greatest impact on how well they performed their tasks, followed by adherence to the code of ethics ( $\beta = 0.019$ ). It is demonstrated that teachers' task performance is not significantly influenced by teachers' qualifications ( $\beta = -0.008$ ). This suggests that, aside from teachers' qualifications, which had no bearing on how well they performed their tasks, the contributions of teachers' professional autonomy and adherence to the code of ethics are rather substantial.

### Discussions of Finding

The answer to research question one revealed that Kwara State's secondary school teachers have a low level of professionalism. According to Maphosa, Bhebhe, and Dziva (2015), Al-Siyabi (2016), and Aja-Okorie (2016), teachers' professionalism had no bearing on their staff members' performance. This suggests that secondary school teachers' ethical behaviour and the freedom to carry out their jobs without interruption or little interference may not necessarily have an impact on how well they accomplish their tasks. The study found that professionalism has a beneficial impact on task performance among secondary school teachers; however, the work of Oyekan (2000) and De-Araugo and Beal (2013) refutes this finding. They also showed that teachers' professionalism has a remarkable impact on their ability to complete the work assigned to them successfully. The second research question showed that Kwara State secondary school teachers score poorly on tasks. This finding supports the findings of Emunemu and Isuku (2011), Kukuru (2011), and Sule (2013), all of whom found that secondary school teachers perform poorly on tasks. This suggests that Kwara State's secondary school teachers underperformed in terms of lesson planning, topic knowledge, and teaching technique. This could be due to several factors, including bad working conditions, a lack of in-service training programs, low pay, and teachers who lack desire.

A considerable joint contribution of teachers' professionalism to teachers' task performance was found in the regression analysis of the joint contribution of the independent variable (teachers' professionalism) to the dependent variable (teachers' task performance). The results support the findings of Yusuf, et al (2014) and Asoga-Allen (2016), who discovered a direct and high correlation between employees' performance and professionalism. Teachers that embody ethical knowledge may be able to implement their teaching techniques with morals and ethics and avoid simply viewing their professions as casual. This suggests that secondary school teachers' adherence to the moral code governing their occupation may enhance job performance. Similarly, teachers who have greater freedom in their jobs are probably more driven to deliver better work. Teachers will be granted the flexibility to carry out their responsibilities if teaching is to be treated as a standardized profession, as it has been in other fields of discipline like medicine and law.

Secondary school teachers will exhibit a high level of task performance under those circumstances because they have complete control over their teaching function or activity, the teaching manual, and pedagogy. The results of hypothesis two showed the regression analysis coefficient for the relative effects of the professionalism of the teachers on students' task performance.

The results demonstrate considerable relative contributions of teachers' professionalism to their job performance, except the teachers' qualification indicator, which had no bearing on it. The outcome supported Onyekuru and Ibegbunam's (2013) research, which indicated a strong positive association between teachers' professionalism and their students' work satisfaction. This outcome supported the findings of Adesina (2005) and Abe (2014), who found no discernible difference in mean between the performance of teachers on the job and their degrees. Many subject teachers, they contended, at least possess the bare minimum of education. They succinctly stated that as long as secondary school teachers possess the minimal certification needed for teaching, their greater degree of educational achievement will have little to no bearing on how well they accomplish their tasks.

### Conclusions

Conclusively, secondary school teachers in Kwara State, Nigeria, might have performed their tasks more effectively if they had followed the code of ethics and had greater professional autonomy. Therefore, the management of secondary education in Kwara State should put compliance with the code of ethics and teachers' autonomy in the correct perspective to improve the task performance of these categories of teachers.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations were made in light of the findings and discussions:

1. The government should comply with the code of ethics and teacher work autonomy to enhance their jobs and improve their performances.
2. The government should grant teachers a certain amount of autonomy so they may carry out their responsibilities in a way that will increase their productivity and enable them to do their work honourably.
3. The first two levels of a teacher's education, the NCE and B.Ed for secondary school teachers, should be made mandatory by the government. The pursuit of advanced degrees in education, such as the M.Ed. and PhD, which have been demonstrated to have little to no impact on secondary school teachers' performance, should be given less priority.

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