

## Gender Difference among Social Studies Teachers' Competences in the Use of the Inquiry Method in South-South Nigeria

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### Abstract

The study assessed social studies teachers' competences in the use of the inquiry method in secondary schools. The target population for the study consisted of 1,110 social studies teachers from all the public secondary schools in Edo, Delta and Bayelsa states of Nigeria. The sample size was 600 social studies teachers drawn from 300 junior secondary schools through stratified random sampling techniques. The local governments were randomly selected from all the senatorial districts in the three states. The study utilized the survey and observational methods. The instrument for the study was the Social Studies Teachers' Competences Inquiry Method Rating Scale (SSTC1MRS). The data collected were analyzed with the use of inferential and non-parametric statistics. The research question was answered using mean and standard deviation, while the hypothesis was tested using t-test. The finding revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female social studies teachers' competences in the use of the inquiry method in upper basic schools. The male and female social studies teachers demonstrated the same level of competence. Based on the finding, it was recommended that both male and female teachers should be exposed to the inquiry teaching skills through workshop and seminars. Regular visits by Ministry of Education supervisors should be encouraged

**Keywords:** Assessment, teachers competencies, inquiry method, social studies, gender

### Introduction

It is observed that academic performance and teachers' competences are determined by several factors. Akpochafo (2003) noted that one of the major factors that is assumed to affect academic performance in school subject is gender. Akiri and Ugborugbo (2008) also asserted that gender is one of the major factors that influences teacher productivity. They noted that gender is of paramount interest to the general populace because females are gradually taking over and dominating the teaching profession in primary and secondary levels of education. This observation was also noted by Ammermueller and Dolton (2006). They reported that females consists of about 75 percent of teachers in United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (U.S.A). Consequently, it seems the phenomenon of gender differentials in educational pursuit, academic performance and teachers' competence has over the years formed a significant part of general discussion in different parts of the world. In some parts of the world, especially Africa, people generally associate certain professions with males and if females are found in such professions it is regarded as abnormal and vice versa. Robert, Harris and Sara (2007) asserted that males are encouraged to take to jobs like engineering while girls are encouraged to enlist in jobs that are mostly accepted as female oriented like teaching. Consequently, this may influence their professional practices, efficiency, and performance on their jobs.

Imogie and Eraikhuemen (2008) defined gender as many socially and culturally constructed characteristics, qualities, behaviour and roles which different societies, ascribe to females and males. The way the society sees the women folk according to them, determines the extent to which women can exhibit their potentials and contribute to national development. Imogie (2007) observed that women have been home makers and character makers and with this limitation, their potentials and competencies are not viewed beyond the home. Okoro (2008) noted that there are obvious status gap between males and females in homes, work place, religious places and everywhere in the Nigerian society. He stressed that gender is linked to culture and since culture varies, gender bias also varies according to the way of life of a society.

Okoro (2010) citing Azikwe (2005) conceptualized gender as the differences in mental and emotional characteristics between the two sexes as prescribed by the society. It seems therefore that the level of ones commitment to a particular job may influence his or her performance. Commitment to job may arise from the interest one has for the profession. Job satisfaction by the teacher may have strong implication for teachers' competence and students' learning. In other words, a teacher's satisfaction with his or her career may influence the quality and stability of instruction given to students. It seems most male teachers opted to teach because it is the most readily available job. It is observed that their role as a breadwinner and head of the family may affect their competencies in teaching. This is because it seems most of the teachers at the primary and secondary school level sometimes do other works such as riding of motor-cycle popularly known as "Okada" to meet-up their family responsibilities at the expense of students. They use teaching as a stepping-stone and interest is low. In a

research carried out by Chukwuemeka (2006), it was discovered that male teachers are more attracted to full business transactions than their female counterparts on account of poor conditions of service. On the other hand, most females opted to teach because they spend less hours away from home. Their natural roles to take care of children and other domestic affairs, may affect their competencies or performance. For instance, the female teacher may not be punctual to school because of her role as a mother. She may also be on a maternity leave for a long period. This may affect her productivity. The study of Chukwuemeka (2006) revealed that female teachers are more satisfied with teaching profession than their male counterparts, and that more male teachers leave the teaching profession than their female counterparts. This implies that the female may perform better than the male and have more influence on the students' academic performance, since job satisfaction leads to teacher effectiveness.

The issue of gender influence on either academic performance or teacher competencies seems to be a controversial one. While some scholars believe that gender has significant influence on performance, others feel that it is of no consequence. The main focus of study is to assess gender differences among social studies teachers' competencies in the use of the inquiry method.

### **Statement of Problem**

It is observed that females are now dominating the teaching profession. Observation has also shown that most social studies educators today still maintain their disposition to the use of expository method which is a teacher-centred method where they dominate instruction in the class. The National Teachers' Institute (N.T.I). (2006) observed that the teaching of social studies has depended on conventional methods of teaching such as the lecture method, diction and note taking, which are not interactive. It emphasized that these methods are inadequate to facilitate optimal learning in pupils and modify their behaviour positively. Abdu-Ralieem (2012) noted that the poor academic performance of most students could be attributed to the conventional lecture method used for teaching the students. The trend now is to encourage social studies teachers to use the inquiry teaching method. The crux of the matter now is, who demonstrates more competence in the use of the inquiry method- the male or the female teacher? The problem of this study therefore is: Does gender influence social studies teachers' competencies in the use of the inquiry teaching method?

### **Research Question**

Is there any difference between male and female social studies teachers' competences in the use of the inquiry method in secondary schools?

### **Research Hypothesis**

There is no significant difference between the male and female social studies teachers' inquiry teaching competences in the use of the inquiry method in secondary school of male, and female Social Studies teachers in secondary schools.

### **Objective of the Study**

The objective of the study is to find out whether gender influences social studies teachers' competencies in the use of the inquiry method.

### **Review of Related literature**

Adegbile and Adeyemi (2008) carried out a study to assess teachers effectiveness as an index of quality assurance. The subjects used for the study were primary school teachers. A total of 100 primary school teachers were randomly selected using purposive random sampling in Ife East and Ife Central Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria. Observational instrument tagged classroom interactive sheet (CIS) was used for assessing teacher effectiveness and an index of quality assurance. Their study revealed that no significant relationship existed between male and female teachers in each category of observed behavioural indices.

Similarly, an examination of gender influence on teacher's productivity in secondary schools in Delta State was carried out by Akiri and Ogborugbo (2008). The study involved nine hundred and seventy-nine (979) teachers made up of four hundred and sixty (460) males and five hundred and nineteen (519) females. Two questionnaires and a rating scale were used to collect data for the study. The result of their analysis revealed that there was no difference in the productivity of male and female teachers. In other words, the differences in the mean productivity were not significant.

In a similar vein, the research of Odugwu (2000) revealed that teachers' competencies in the use of computer are independent of gender and subject taught. In other words, the use of computer does not depend on gender. Holmlund & Sund (2006)" investigated whether the academic performance can be attributed to the fact that the teacher profession is female dominated, that is, is there a causal effect on student outcomes from having a same-sex teacher? Using data on upper-secondary school students and their teachers from the municipality of

Stockholm, Sweden, it was discovered that gender has no effect on students' outcome. The study of Olibie and Ezeoba (2010) also showed that gender is not significant. Conversely Akpochofo (2003) in his study reported that there is significant difference between male and female in academic achievement. In other words gender has a role to play in academic achievement of students. Ahmed, Nawaz, Naveed, Ali, Zeeshan Lahore, Gujranwala and Usman (2010) observed in their study that there is significant difference between male and female employees with female employees having more job satisfaction than the male employees. Hamdan, Ghafar and Hwali (2010) investigated the level of teaching competency among school teachers in Malaysia. The population of the study consisted of 309 teachers from different secondary and primary school in Johor Bahru. The questionnaire instrument was used to measure their teaching competency skills. Data collected was analysed with mean, t-test and Pearson correlation. The result revealed that all the teachers are competent and that there is significant relationship between teaching competency and gender.

### Research Design

The study is a survey design which applied the observational method.

### Population

The target population of the study was 1,110 social studies teachers from all the public schools.

### Sample and Sampling techniques

A total of 300 junior secondary schools were randomly selected. The sample size was 600 social studies teachers made up of 210 male teachers and 390 female teachers. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select social studies teachers.

### Instrumentation/Administration

The instrument for this study was social studies teacher competencies inquiry method rating scale (SSTCIMRS) the instrument was validated by two measurement and evaluation specialists from the Guidance and Counselling Department, and one social studies specialist from the Department of Social Science Education of the Delta State University, Abraka. The instrument was used to assess the social studies teachers' competencies level. Each teacher was observed for 45 minutes.

### Reliability of the instrument

The reliability of the instrument was established by using Cronbach's Alpha method. A reliability coefficient of 0.66 was obtained which show internal consistency of the instrument.

### Method of Data Analysis

The data generated were analyzed using t-test statistics. The 0.05 level of significance was adopted for the analysis.

### Result

Table 1 shows the result.

**Table 1-** t-test Summary table of the Assessment of male and female social studies teachers' competencies in the use of the inquiry method

Variable	Mean	STD	N	df	t Calc	t Crit	Sign. Level	Remark
Male Teachers	88.26	13.05	210	598	-2.53	1.65	0.05	Accept
Female Teachers	91.03	12.33	390					

The table shows that there is no significant difference between male and female social studies teachers' competencies in the use of the inquiry method since the calculated t (-2.53) with df (598) at P. value of 0.05 level of significance is less than the t Critical value (1.65). The null hypothesis was therefore accepted.

### Discussion of Result

The analysis of data revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female social studies teachers' competencies in the use of the inquiry teaching method. The finding is not in consonance with finding of Hamdan, Ghafar and Hwali (2010) and Ahmed, Nawaz, Naveed, Ali, Zeeshan, Lahore, Gujranwala and Usman (2010), who found that there is significant difference between male and female teacher competencies. The finding is in conformity with the study of Akiri and Ugborugbo (2008) who found that there is no significant relationship between male and female teachers' competencies. The possible reason for this result might be deduced from the fact that the level of one's commitment to a particular job may influence his or her performance (Okoro, 2008). Ogheneakoke (2014) noted that most male social studies teachers at the primary and secondary schools sometimes do other works such as riding of motorcycle/tricycle popularly known as "Okada"/"keke na-

pep” and other form of businesses to meet up their family responsibilities, while some of the female teachers also engage in petty trading as well as other form of businesses. They have little or no time to study. Consequently, their inputs on the job would be very low since they lack the dedication demanded by the job. This could affect their competency level.

### Conclusion

The study shows that no significant difference exists between male and female social studies teachers’ competencies in the use of the inquiry teaching method.

### Recommendations

- (1) Both male and female social studies teachers should be exposed to the inquiry teaching skills through workshop and seminars.
- (2) Regular visit by the Ministry of Education supervisors should be encouraged to ensure that teachers stick more to inquiry teaching method.

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