

## **Influence of teacher's competence in subject matter on students' interest in the learning of social studies education in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

Within the background of perceived decrease in students' interest in the learning of Social Studies Education, the research on Influence of Teachers' Competence in Subject Matter on Students' Interest in the Learning of Social Studies Education in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria was aimed at determining the contributions of students' perception of teachers' competence in subject matter on students' interest in learning with particular attention to Social Studies Education. The ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. Null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. The data for the work were collected with the help of Influence of Teachers' competence in subject matter on students' interest in the learning of social studies questionnaire (ITCSMSILSQ) as the working instrument. The stratified random sampling technique and the simple random sampling technique were adopted for the choice of samples from the population which consisted of all Social Studies Education Students in Akwa Ibom State. The face and content validity were established and the alpha Cronbach coefficient was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. The collected data was then coded and analyzed using the One way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The hypothesis was calculated at F-value of 10.30 to be significant at 0.05 level with a critical value of 3.00. The Fishers' LSD Multiple Comparison Analysis was used to determine the group means that brought the significance. All showed that students with moderate and high level perception of teachers' characteristics experienced more interest in Social Studies Education than students with low level perception. Based on the above result conclusions was drawn that teachers' competence in subject matter has much influence on students' interest in learning with particular reference to Social Studies Education. Some recommendations made including the need to ensure proper and effective teacher education in Nigeria.

**Key words:** Teachers' competence, Students' interest and Learning

## Introduction

Problems associated with learner's interest in learning process cannot be effectively addressed without assessing the role of the teacher. The educational process cannot be what it should be without the teacher. At the same time, the teacher cannot be effective without possessing certain characteristics. This is to say that certain characteristics of the teacher are indispensable for the learners' interest towards an effective learning. One of such characteristics is the competence in subject matter (Esu,2001; Isangedighi,2007; Mezieobi,Fubara and Mezieobi,2008; and Yenilmez and Çemrek, 2008; Akintayo and Onabanjo,2008). Scholars such as Akpan, Essien and Obot (2008); Yenilmez and Çemrek ( 2008) are also of the opinion that teachers' characteristics are related to students' attitude to learning and performance.

According to Abraham Maslow's theory of needs, everyone is motivated by what satisfies his needs. Maslow (1954) articulates that individuals are motivated to produce better results when their needs are adequately satisfied at appropriate time and place. This theory of Maslow (1954) is based on some assumptions that: There are intrinsic needs that motivate behaviour in order to attain specific goals. Lower needs are powerful and must be satisfied before higher needs. This is shared by Strauss & Sayles (1980). Satisfaction of learners' need can influence their interest in learning. Teachers' competence in subject matter involves the ability of the teacher to satisfy his learners' needs with the subject matter of his lesson.

Many scholars understand issues of subject matter in the teaching and learning process simply as teachers' personal knowledge and mastery of the subject matter. Understood this way, the factors that enhance the skills and competence of the teacher in the use of this knowledge in guiding the learner in the teaching and learning process is often neglected. The teacher needs supporting factors in relation to the subject matter to make him competent in the use of such knowledge in the teaching and learning process. Consequently, it was assumed that students of Social studies Education will be interested in learning if the teachers' role playing involving his competence in subject matter transmission leads to the satisfaction of their needs.

For many decades of the existence of Social Studies Education as a discipline, one of the major problems facing it has been the inadequacy of professional and efficient teachers for its different levels and grades of studies in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. A survey study by this researcher revealed decline in students' enrolment for Social Studies Education In College of Education Afaha Nsit between 2006, 2007 and 2008 to be 364, 258 and 230 respectively (Obot, Survey,2011). This raises a major question: Why do we have a consistent decline in the number of people enrolling to learn Social Studies Education? Is it possible that teachers are partly responsible for this situation?

The area of our study was Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Akwa Ibom State is one of the thirty six states including the federal capital territory of the federal republic of Nigeria created on 23<sup>rd</sup> of September, 1987. It is made up of 31 local government areas. It is bounded at the North and North West by Abia state, at the South West by Rivers state, at the East by Cross River state, Nigeria and at the South by the Atlantic Ocean and at the South South zone or the Delta region at the Bight of Bonny. It has a land mass of 8,412 sq km and a population of 3.92 million people (National census, 2006). It lies between latitudes 4<sup>o</sup> 33' and 5<sup>o</sup> 33' North and longitude 7<sup>o</sup> 35' and 8<sup>o</sup> 25' East. The people of the state are culturally homogeneous with a common identity and

linguistic heritage. The three major intra – ethnic groups in the state include the Annang, the Ibibio and the Oron. They share much in common with the rest of Nigerians.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In spite of the various studies on teachers' characteristics by scholars such as Cain (1971), Arubayi (1981) Adeduwura and Tayo (2007) and Adeyemi (2008), not much have been studied on the influence of learners' perception of these characteristics on the attitudinal disposition of learners and their interest towards learning especially in the case of Social Studies Education in particular.

Be this as it may, the problem that this research grappled was that of inadequate competent Social Studies teachers in the various levels of education in Nigeria. Thus it seeks to establish if Social Studies Education students' perception of teachers' characteristics such as teachers' competence in subject matter have a significant influence on students' interest in the study of Social Studies Education. This will help not only in Social Studies Education but in the entire learning contexts in Nigeria in relation to teacher education.

### **Research question**

The following research question was put forward as a guide to facilitate the required internal coherence within the study from its introduction to conclusion: Does students' perception of teachers' competence in subject matter influence the students' interest in the learning of Social Studies Education?

### **Statement of hypothesis**

The following hypothesis in the null form was advanced to guide the study: Students' perception of the teachers' competence in subject matter does not significantly influence the students' interest in learning in Social Studies Education. This hypothesis also guided the researcher in determining relevant data relating to teachers' competence in subject matter that can sustain students' interest in Social Studies Education.

### **Teachers' competence in subject matter and students' interest in learning**

Akpan, Essien and Obot (2008) asserted that one of the most important teacher variables that enhance their effectiveness is the mastery of the subject matter. For Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (2008), any meaningful conception of teaching Social Studies should recognize the nature of the subject and the good-objects to be taught and learned. Teachers should sufficiently familiarize themselves with the subject matter to be taught.

According to Rena (2000), good knowledge of the subject matter helps the teacher to teach the learners correctly. This in turn leads to the achievement of set objectives and the consequent interest of the learners' to continue in the learning process. This scholar adds that it has been established that there is a high correlation between what teachers know and what they teach.

Ehindero and Ajibade (2000) confirmed that a teachers' performance is influenced by the level of his pedagogical knowledge, as different from his knowledge of subject matter. It is to be noted

that pedagogical knowledge is not exactly the same thing as knowledge of subject matter. However they are nevertheless intimately linked. This is because teachers' mastery and use of pedagogical knowledge in the classroom will indicate the depth of their competence in the use of his knowledge of subject matter. The competence in the subject matter is an indispensable foundation for the display of good and effective pedagogical skills. Teacher's level of knowledge on the subject matter has much influence on the process of achieving the lesson's objectives. Teachers without good grasp of subject matter, if he can succeed in bluffing the students, he has only succeeded in impacting incorrect information. This is likely to bring difficulties to the learners and subsequently to other teachers.

Rice (2003) made his contribution that teachers must possess sufficient knowledge in their area of teaching. Any teacher that does not possess the required knowledge of subject matter in his area of teaching cannot be effective. Rice (2003) added that it is not difficult for students to perceive teachers' insufficient knowledge of subject matter in his teaching area. This leads to students' loss of respect for and confidence in the teacher. Consequently, it leads to learners' poor academic performance. Still on this, Ehindero and Ajibade (2000) showed that the average academic performance of students in five selected subjects correlate and depend significantly on students' perception of teachers' knowledge of subject matter. This result is consistent with previous findings of other scholars such as Akpan, Essien and Obot (2008) and Adediwura and Tayo(2007).

Adediwura and Tayo(2007) carried out a related study on senior secondary three (SS.III) students in schools in the South West zone of Nigeria. The study sample consisted of 1600 purposively selected SSS III students from 15 selected secondary schools in the area of study. A questionnaire with four sections was developed and administered on the subjects. The instrument consisted of a test-retest reliability of 0.64 over a period of two weeks ( $n = 40, r = 0.64, = < .05$ ) an internal consistency (K - R20) reliability of 0.72 ( $< .05$ ) and a Cronbach coefficient alpha 0.70. Using simple percentages, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and chi-square statistics to test the three hypotheses generated in the study, the obtained data were analyzed. The result showed that students' perception of teachers' knowledge of subject matter had a significant relationship on students' academic performance.

In another instance, Aboderin (2001) wrote that teaching is a profession and intending teachers should have mastery of the subject in which they specialize in. In line with this, Esu (2001) saw basic knowledge of related subject matter as a required condition for effective teaching. Thus she continued that effective teaching implies teacher's ingenuity, sound knowledge of the subject matter, professional commitment, imaginative and sound knowledge of the underlying psychology, the history, the sociology and philosophy of the subject matter.

Eggen and Kauchak (2001) highlighted three headings under which a study on teachers' knowledge of subject matter can be done. These are namely: knowledge of content, pedagogical content knowledge and general pedagogical knowledge. The implication of this for teachers is that they must not only be conversant with the content themselves but must also be competent in the use of such knowledge during their teaching process if they are to be effective enough to promote learning. In a similar way, Eggen and Kauchak (2001) also declared that where pedagogical content knowledge is lacking, teachers commonly paraphrase information or provide abstract explanations that are not clear to their learners. Subscribing to positions such as that of Eggen and Kauchak (2001) above, Esu (2001) saw mastery of subject matters as the

teachers' ability to break down the subject matter into logical and smaller units for clearly, easier and faster comprehension of content by the learners.

Although the previous studies had studied many aspects of teaching and learning connected with teachers' mastery of subject matter, the researchers were carried out with samples from secondary schools which could not validly proof the possible result for learners in tertiary institutions where Social Studies Education is studies. The age of the learners in the tertiary institutions is different. The aspect of students' interest in the learning process was not adequately looked at. This study was found still necessary for possible confirmations or refutations or even still to help put facts in their right perspectives on teachers' competence on subject matter and students' interest for effective learning in Social Studies Education.

### **Research design**

The research design adopted for this study was the ex-post facto research design. The ex-post facto research design was found most appropriate in a situation of systematic empirical study being that the researcher had no direct control over the independent variable.

### **Population of the study**

The population of this study consisted of all the second year Social Studies Education students of 2012/2013 school session in Akwa Ibom State. These schools have a total of 1028 and 973 students studying Social Studies Education as a course at the undergraduate level respectively (Academic Planning Unit, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, 2012/2013; Academic Planning Unit, College Of Education, Afaha Nsit, 2012/2013).

### **Sampling technique**

The sampling technique adopted for this study was the stratified random sampling technique and the simple random sampling. Stratified random sampling technique was the sampling technique with which the researcher ensured that all the sub-units (groups) in the population were adequately represented in the study. The main reason for using simple random sampling technique was to ensure that the sample will yield research data that can be generalized to a larger population. Here the researcher used a population of 50% from each of the sub-units of the total population of Social Studies Education students from each of the two schools offering Social Studies Education in Akwa Ibom State as shown in the sample table. (See Table 1).

**TABLE 1****Population distribution sample from Social Studies Education Students**

Distribution	Population	50%
University of Uyo	1028	514
College of Education	973	486
Total	2001	1000

Source: Field Survey, 2011.

**Reliability of the instrument and Instrumentation**

The Face and construct validities of the instrument were established with the help of experts in measurement and evaluation in the faculty of Education, University of Calabar, Calabar. To ascertain the reliability, understanding and clarity of the questions in the instrument, a trial test was carried out. Fifty students were randomly selected from the third year of the subject area of Social Studies Education from College of Education, Afaha Nsit for this trial test of reliability by administration of the instrument. Alpha croanbach coefficient was used to correlate the data obtained. The correlation coefficient derived is presented in Table 2 below:

**TABLE 2**

**Alpha croanbach coefficient of the research  
instrument (N=50)**

S/n	Variables	No Items	$\bar{X}$	SD	ALPHA COE
	teachers' competence in subject matter	5	16.38	1.29	0.55
	Students' interest in learning	5	17.74	1.63	0.75

**Procedure for data collection**

The main dependent variable of the study is Students' Interest in learning Social Studies Education. The independent variable of the study was Students' perception of the teachers' competence in subject matter. The mean and standard deviation of the main variable of the study was calculated and presented as shown in table 3. (See Table 3).

**TABLE 3**  
**General description of research variables**

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
Teachers' Competence in subject matter	1000	16.38	1.28
Students' Interest in learning	1000	17.74	1.61

### Presentation of results

In this section, the study hypothesis was restated in the null form. The variables in the hypothesis as well as the statistical analysis technique adopted to test it are presented. The hypothesis was tested at .05 levels of significance as in table 4 (see Table 4).

**TABLE 4**  
**One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the influence of teachers' competence in subject matter on their interest in Social Studies Education (N=1000)**

Group	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
Low teachers' competence in subject matter	200	17.70	1.19
Moderate teachers' competence in subject matter	320	18.06	1.82
High teachers' competence in subject matter	480	17.54	1.58
Total	1000	17.74	1.61

  

Source of	Sums of	Df	MS	F-ratio
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variation	squares			
Between groups	52.483	2	26.242	
Within groups	2539.917	997	2.548	10.301
Total	2592.400	999		

\*Significant at .05 level, critical  $F=2, 997 = 3.00$

The upper part of Table 4 shows the group mean and standard deviation for the three groups of students' perception of teachers' competence in subject matter. The lower part of the table shows the results of analysis of variance (ANOVA) used to compare these group mean. The comparison yielded an F-ratio of 10.301, which is greater than the critical F-value of 3.00 at .05 level of significance with 2 and 997 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant influence of students' perception of teachers' competence in subject matter on their interest in the learning of Social Studies Education. To clearly show the group mean which brought about the significance, a post hoc multiple comparison analysis was carried out using Fishers' least significance difference multiple comparison tests. The result of this analysis is presented in Table 5.

**TABLE 5**

**Fishers' multiple comparison analysis (LSD) of the influence of students' perception of teachers' competence in subject matter on their interest in Social Studies Education**

Teachers' competence in subject matter (I)	Teachers' competence in subject matter (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Standard Error	
Low	Moderate	-.3625*	.14387	.012
	High	.1583	.13433	.239
Moderate	Low	.3625*	.14387	.012
	High	.5208*	.11519	.000
High	Low	-.1583	.13433	.239
	Moderate	-.5208	.11819	.000

\*Significant at .05 level

The Fishers' LSD multiple comparison analysis result presented in Table 5 shows that the mean differences between low level group and moderate level group, and between low level group and high level group are each significant at .05 level. This implies that students with moderate level of perception experience a significant higher level interest in learning Social Studies Education

than students with low level perception of teachers' competence in subject matter. Similarly students with high level perception of teachers' competence in subject matter experience a significant higher level of interest in learning Social Studies Education than students with low perception of teachers' competence in subject matter. The Table further shows that there is, however, no significant difference between the level of interest in the learning of Social Studies Education among students with moderate perception of teachers' competence in subject matter and interest in learning Social Studies Education among students with high perception of teachers' competence in subject matter. The result of the testing of this hypothesis indicated that students' perception of the teachers' competence in subject matter significantly influences their Interest in learning Social Studies Education.

## Discussions

This aspect of the study will be divided into subsections. These include:

1. General discussions
2. Factors in teacher education and teachers' competence in subject matter in Nigeria
3. Philosophical Considerations of teachers' competence in subject matter

1. General discussions

The above findings are partly in line with the view of such as Rena (2000) who observed that a good knowledge of the subject matter helps the teacher to teach the learners correctly and also helps the learner to learn correctly. This in turn leads to the achievement of set objectives and the consequent interest of the learners' to continue in the learning process. As highlighted above, teachers' level of knowledge on the subject matter has much influence on the process of achieving the lesson's objectives. In line with this, Rice (2003) also asserts that teachers must possess sufficient knowledge in their area of teaching. Any teacher that does not possess the required knowledge of subject matter in his area of teaching cannot be effective. According to Tella (2008) it may lead to learners' lost of interest in studying. It also negatively influences the students' performance.

It can be established from the above that there is a high correlation between what teachers know and what they teach. However, teacher's competence in subject goes beyond teacher's knowledge of subject matter. This must have been implied by Ehindero (1990) when he put forward that a teachers' performance is influenced by the level of his pedagogical knowledge as different from his knowledge of subject matter. It is to be noted that pedagogical knowledge are not exactly the same thing as knowledge of subject matter though they are nevertheless intimately connected. Teachers' mastery and use of pedagogical knowledge in the classroom and other factors come together to make up the important indicators of the depth of the teacher's competence in subject matter. The findings above goes beyond these to articulate the importance of students' interest in the learning process among the learners in the study area. Teachers' competence in subject matter must go beyond mere knowledge of the subject matter. The teachers' competence in subject matter should involve his skill to develop learning interest among the learners. What are some of the factors that are responsible for the poor development of such skills in our teachers especially in the field of Social Studies Education? Being that

teachers' competence in subject matter do influence students' interest in the learning of Social Studies Education in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, What are some the factors in teacher education in Nigeria that are responsible for the production of low level capacity and competence among teachers? How Competence should in teacher in relation to subject matter be understood towards efficient teacher training in Nigeria?

## 2. Factors in teacher education and teachers' competence in subject matter in Nigeria

According to section 5(d) of the Nigerian National Policy on Education(2014), one of the goals of education derived from its philosophy is: "The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society" (NPE,2004). This aspect of the policy shows clearly the government's intention and aim among other things to include the building of sufficient knowledge, competence and enhance capacity among the citizens of the country including the learners in teacher education to build teachers' competence in their profession. This cannot be done or advanced better except in a classroom setting. The foundation of such competence can most effectively be built in the teacher in his learning experiences as an education student. However, experience and research have shown that the above have not been completely realized in many teachers. This has negatively impacted on their learners' interest in learning Social Studies in their later profession as teachers. There are several factors that are responsible for poor learning experiences in teacher education.

In the technical sense of the term "formal education," It may not be an over statement if it is said that it has still not received the quality and quantity of attention it deserves. It is not surprising that formal education in some areas in Africa still appear not to be given its rightful place. Consequently, sometimes it is not given the required and sufficient attention that it should be given. It cannot be said without fear of contradiction that education is comfortably seated in many cultures including those of some African societies.

The poor conditions of education including teacher education in some Nigerian societies have in no small measure impacted negatively on the teaching profession itself. This profession that was held in very high esteem in the earliest beginning of western education in Nigeria has since remained incapable of maintaining that pride of place. Apart from the contemporary cultural values which do appear sometimes to be shifting away from educational excellence, economic implications of being in the teaching profession have impacted very negatively on the societies' perception of it causing its devaluation in the Nigerian context. In the words of Idoli and Umanah (2009) captured in another way by Otu, Essien, Obot and Akpan (2009), contemporary teaching profession is clamoring for a citadel for recognition and identity which would weld, glue and araldite on it an image that will give it credibility and put it on the same level with other respected professions that gain much respect and acceptability in the society. These scholars go ahead to say that one of the factors responsible for this is that teachers in Nigeria are paid insulting salaries. Be this as it is, Teachers' lack of motivation consequently impacts negatively on learners' interest towards learning. Thus part of the difficulties imparting on learners' interest in learning arises from the nature of teacher education which is the major source of teacher development and capacity building on subject matter competence.

Some other related factors include:

1. Not paying adequate attention to the background of those who apply to be admitted into teacher education.
2. Not paying adequate attention to the entry point qualification of those admitted into teacher education.
3. Some Negligence of the psycho-social factor that determine the level of motivation and interest of those who are admitted into the tertiary institution for teacher education.

According to Otu, Essien, Obot and Akpan (2009) in their article “Influence of Parental Socio-Economic Status and Examination Malpractices Among Undergraduate in Tertiary Institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria”, some of those admitted into our tertiary institutions come from a socially and economically poor background. According to this study most of such students have low level of morality. The quest for certificate in Nigeria education makes it that in most cases, educational achievements of certificates are but a do or die affair. Being that this is the case, the low morality and the unconventional quest for certificate and the poor economic condition of students negatively impact on students who resort to seeking for academic qualifications in unconventional manners. Teacher education is not an exemption to this. There is no doubt that unconventional manner of academic qualification in the teaching profession will negatively impact on professional competence of such teachers especially in the area of subject matter (Idoli and Umanah,2009). These live many of our teachers including those of social studies Education with only “certificate qualification” not very competent with the subject matter of their discipline of studies.

Again, the entry point qualification of people who go in for teacher education do also negatively impact on the quality of teachers’ competence in subject matter. Apart from the various examinations taken to gain admission into Nigerian tertiary institutions, there are other factors that sometime also influence admission into our school. These include what is known as the “quota system”. Quota system refers to a system of reserving or allocating admission qualification to a class of people and excluding others in the admission qualification test process. This system is often explained as an assistance and opportunity to areas and locations with low level of educated citizens in our society (Otu, Essien, Obot and Akpan ,2009). It is also sometimes said to create equality in education opportunity among the educationally disadvantaged areas and locations in situations of high academic competitions. As laudable and credible as it may appear, the quota system in admission process occasion’s disparity in admission requirements with the concomitant effect of lowering standards to accommodate those favored by the system. In most cases, the more academically qualified candidates are not admitted while the less academically qualified candidates favored by the system are admitted. The phenomena of quota system bring into our schools less academically qualified students at the point of entry (Otu, Essien, Obot and Akpan ,2009). Invariably, this later influences the subject matter competence of such students at the point of graduation. This also is true among students of teacher education. This causes poor subject matter competence among teachers of such background and subsequently impacts negatively on students’ interest in learning.

There is another factor closely related to the issue of teacher education students’ entry point qualification. This has to do with the determination of “cut off” points for admission into tertiary institutions. In some cases, the “cut off” point for admission into educational courses including Social Studies Education is lower compared to those of other courses. Be this as it were, many

candidates who cannot meet the “cut-off” point in other course are often admitted into education courses. Akinbote (2007) carried out a study on the entry qualification of students into the programme for the award of the national certificate of education (NCE) in Nigeria. Presently, the National certificate of education is the minimum qualification for the teaching profession in the Nigeria. By the educational practice, this group of teachers teaches between learners in early childhood and Basic Nine which is the cradle of the Nigerian education process. The population for this study consisted of 1200 students of teacher education selected from seven colleges of education in six South Western states of Nigeria. The study showed that 44.60% of the sample passed between 3-4 senior secondary/General Certificate Ordinary (GCE) O’level papers or equivalent. Those with one to three papers of the same qualification consisted of 31.00% while those with five credits and above form the lowest percentage of 24%. Thus this study showed that those with the basic academic qualification at the time of admission into the teacher education within the population of study were a little above 50%. There is no doubt that this negatively impacts on teachers’ competence in subject matter and subsequently on students’ interest in learning.

The same study also made a related revelation on the students’ disposition towards teacher education at the time of admission. 43.75% of the students went in for teacher education because no other school offered them admission. 31.00% went into teacher education as a stepping stone but may eventually end up in the teaching profession program because of peer influence. Another 3.75% went into teacher education to satisfy the wish of their parents. Only 12.50% went into teacher education because they had the original desire to become teachers. These are factors that negatively influence on learners’ interest in learning arising from factors in teacher education that cannot develop in teachers the capacity for competence in subject matter handling (Akinbote ,2007) including those of Social Studies Education.

The above situation implies that some of the teachers and students of teacher education do not have a good entry point qualification and originally did not intend to go in for a course in teacher education. This procedure of quota system and low cut off point appear to forget that students in teacher education are future transmitters of knowledge to future generations which requires students of high qualities. Very often students in these classes of admissions perform poorly with low acquisition of competence in subject matter. In most cases, from the moment of admission, learners from the gains of quota system and low cut off point see themselves as inferior and consequently develop a very poor self concept. Kimani, Cheboswoswony, Kodero, and Misigo (2009) in their studies on the academic performance of institutionalized and non institutionalized children that are HIV/AIDS orphaned in Kisumu confirmed that low self concept negatively impact on academic performance of learners. Studies have also confirmed that teachers with low self concept often impact very negatively on their students (Adekunle, 2006).

According to Pintrich and Groot (1990), motivation is a very important factor in relation to interest and learning in education. Learners must be psychologically and physically disposed and involved in the process of education. They must develop a positive and convincing reason of success why they undertake a particular task. This according to Pintrich and Groot (1990) is a very necessary factor for a good academic performance. In the case of teacher education including that of Social Studies Education, where some factors create the absence of such motivation, there is no doubt that their performance in related areas including competence in

subject matter will be negatively affected. The conditions mentioned above become worst when students in teacher education study in an incapacitating learning environment. More importantly, the above authors further confirm that students and teachers motivated are most likely to do well when performing any task. In whatever way, the relationship between a teacher and a learner in the transmission of subject matter will be negative if the teacher has a low self concept. In addition, some develop a very poor attitude and disposition towards the teaching profession. In a situation such as presented above, there is no doubt that some of the students of teacher education are not effectively and sufficiently motivated to develop sufficient and effective self concept. Kimani, Cheboswoswony, Kodero, and Misigo (2009) in their studies on the academic performance of institutionalized and non institutionalized children that are HIV/AIDS orphaned in Kisumu confirmed that low self concept negatively impact on academic performance of learners. Studies have also confirmed that teachers with low self concept often impact very negatively on their students (Adekunle,2006) which later influences the interest of their students towards learning.

The issue of non qualified teachers, although significantly tackled in the Nigerian education system still remains a problem to be solved to enhance teachers competence in subject matter and students' interest in the teaching and learning process. Ugwoke (2012) notices a great need to secure a qualitative upgrading of level of teachers' subject matter competence of staff of teacher education. In a related study, Din, Khan and Mahmood (2010) observed that the teachers teaching qualification impacts on his competence and the quality of students' produced. Teachers' qualifications impact in many ways on the technique, method and strategy of their subject matter delivery of and consequently on the learners' interest and performance. The teachers' qualifications impact on the teachers' competence to meet the needs of the learners and this is an important factor in sustaining the interest of learners in learning. Thus the quality of teacher contributes to learners' interest through the teachers' quality of subject matter input.

In addition, Poor facilities in our learning environment have factored much for poor interest and performance of learners in teacher education. The connection between the environment of teacher education and the subsequent performance of learners was alluded to by Gbadebo (2011) who in his study concluded that qualitative education may not be possible in a condition where the medium for desirable value and skill cannot be properly and effectively put across to learners. This was concluded from a study made in five schools. He noted that negative economic factors in Nigeria have negatively impacted on the society's ability to provide capacitating learning experiences to students including those of teacher education. The contemporary negative effects of poor resources and facilities on education especially teacher education cannot be over emphasized. Teacher education under an incapacitating environmental condition cannot develop in the trained teachers themselves the competence in subject matter that can develop in learners the necessary interest for learning.

The concern for teacher quality is becoming an issue in teacher education in the African continent. The situation is not different in Nigeria including Akwa Ibom State in particular. Sometimes the problem of the concern lies most important on the direction of the concern and the proper need in the particular context. The recent attention paid to teachers in teacher education, the disbursement of funds for improvement of facilities and the restructuring of examination conducts are parts of the attention paid to teacher education within the general

context of improvement of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. In Akwa Ibom State in particular much has been added to education sector including teacher education. These include attention paid to the federal university located within the state where teachers are also trained. The newly established University in the state has quickly moved to establish her faculty of education towards teacher education. Other aids to teaching profession within the state include improved remuneration for staff of teacher education, improved facilities in teachers working environment, improved school environment including offices, classrooms, libraries and laboratories housings. All these are aimed at achieving the national policy statement in education which includes:

- (A) To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of education system
- (B) To encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity of teachers
- (C) To help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives
- (D) To provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country, but in the wider world
- (E) To enhance teachers commitment to the teaching profession (NPE,2004).

This would have been very wonderful for teacher education if policies and implementations were the same.

However, it is still doubtful if it can be said that the output can justify whatever input have been made. More still need to be done to enhance competence development in teacher education for guarantees interest in learning among learners. The integral nature of the required component for subject matter competence in the education process makes its related issues in Nigeria teacher education equally multidimensional and technical. There need for effective professionalism in school management development.

### 3. Philosophical Considerations of teachers' competence in subject matter

Some scholars of Social Studies Education fail to give adequate and effective interpretations to the meaning of competence in Subject matter. Thus it becomes difficult for such scholars to neither measure teachers' competence in subject matter nor evaluate properly when a teacher is competent in subject matter. Mastery in subject matter, lesson presentation and educational methods are in most cases related to ensure teachers' competence in subject matter. In Social Studies as well as other disciplines, effective subject matter transmission is not an independent activity. Apart from other components such as teacher's qualification, teacher's professional commitment, teacher's self concept, teacher's lesson plan, teacher's classroom management skills, teacher's motivational skills (Adepoju, 2008) and teacher's method of lesson presentation, the teacher needs to take into consideration other professional needs of his. He needs also to be efficient in terms of personal ingenuity such as communication skills and record keeping. This is where teaching and concept advertisement share many things in common. The teacher must advertise the subject matter as a product in a way that the interest of learners who are the buyers must be captured. He should also be predicated with sound knowledge of underlying psychology, the history, sociology and philosophy of the overall aim and objectives of the subject matter and the needs of the learners must be taken into consideration. Esu(2001) has a similar view. These assist the teacher to present their subject matter in the needed proper perspective. In the presentation of subject matter, the teacher needs to understand the age, the environment and the

needs of the learner and that of the society. The history of the subject matter as it relates to its development in scholarship and the relevance to the society of its immediate environment will enhance the choice of its method and technique of presentation. This will also enhance the learner's participation and interest. The philosophy of subject matter enhances the teacher's understanding of possible and actual issues surrounding subject matter and its proper means of transmission as it is in the school curriculum for skillful presentation to learners.

Competence in subject matter by the teacher should be distinguished from the teachers' mere Knowledge or mastery of subject matter if the learner interest is to be captured in the education process as it should be. Knowledge or mastery of subject matter refers to the teacher's personal understanding of concepts involved in the subject matter while the competence on it refers to the teacher's skillful management of his knowledge or mastery of subject matter towards the effective learning by learners. This must be emphasized to enhance effective competence in subject matter transmission for effective interest capturing and learning by learners.

Teacher's pedagogical style is a central issue in learner's perception of a teacher's competence in subject matter and subsequent interest in the learning. In many areas of scholarship today, emphasis is placed on the learner as the center of education. This continues to make the constructivist method of education more popular. Many scholars in Nigeria associate John Dewey and R. S. Peters with this method of education. This method of education emphasizes that learners should be guided to participate in knowledge engineering rather than attempt to infuse knowledge into them. Through such participation, learners have a sense of involvement, task setting, motivation, satisfaction at success and interest to continue in the learning. Learner's through learners to construct meaning from the subject matter presented by a teacher. These assist the learner to relate the lesson to personal needs which when satisfied develops his interest towards learning. It also sustains the learners' interest. Learning should be designed to involve mental construction of meaning in a pragmatic language within a familiar context of experience with relevant activities meaningfully organized to motivate learners towards their practical life in the society (Ofoegbu,2004;Santrook,2004). According to the mind of Jibia and Okam(2012), the traditional lecture method and the likes which is used by some Social Studies Education teachers in Nigeria lacks the capacity to meet the requirements above. It lacks the capacity within the classroom setting to achieve the aims and objectives of the discipline which include the cultivation of positive attitude towards related social norms and values for positive citizenship, expose the learners to possible enabling avenues and opportunities for the good of the individual learner and the society as a whole. Learners learn better from the presentation of the subject matter when minds and hands are on deck.

## **Conclusion**

From the above, we can conclude that teachers' competence in subject matter does actually influence students' interest in the learning of Social Studies Education. Students of high and medium level of teachers' competence in subject matter experience significant level of interest in the learning of Social Studies Education. Students of low level of teachers' competence in subject matter experience low level of interest in the learning of Social Studies Education. Practices such as quarter system, poor entry point qualification in admissions in teacher education impact negatively on the level of teachers' competence in subject matter and

poor remuneration to teachers influences self concept, motivation and their disposition towards teachers' competence in subject matter. The interpretation of competence in subject matter influences the evaluation of such competence in related practices. The pedagogical methods and techniques adopted in teaching do influence the level of students' interest in learning. Education should interact more with social and management sciences integrate the principles of interest development into its techniques of interest development and sustenance in lesson delivery.

## Recommendations

1. Admission into teacher education should be based only on academic merit.
2. Philosophy of Education should be more employed in the analysis of actual meaning of key terms in education. The teacher should be competent in transmitting the philosophy, sociology, aims and objectives of subject matter during lesson delivery.
3. Teacher education should ensure the development of effective pedagogical skills in would be teachers.
4. Teacher education should focus attention on learner interest as an important aspect of teacher competence.
5. Education management should interact more with the general principles of management to import policies and principles of interest into teacher education for more teacher effectiveness.

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