

ENTRENCHING QUALITY EDUCATIONAL OUTPUT THROUGH TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL ETHICS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND CONFIDENTIALITY

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ABSTRACT: *The study examined the entrenchment of quality educational output through teachers' professional ethics of social justice and confidentiality in federal universities, South-South Zone of Nigeria. Two research questions were raised, and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The correlational research design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised 6,305 teaching staff and 32,613 graduating students in the 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 academic sessions distributed into the six federal universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria. Purposive and simple random sampling method of balloting were used to select 1,275 (20%) teaching staff and 3,517 (10%) students. Two instruments titled "Ethics of Social Justice and Confidentiality Questionnaire (ESJCQ)", and "Graduate Educational Output Checklist (GEOC)" were used for data collection. The reliability coefficient of ESJCQ was determined using the Cronbach Alpha Analysis and a reliability index of 0.87 was obtained. Coefficient of R value and R² were used to answer the research questions, while the f-value of Simple Linear Regression Analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that the quality of educational output in Nigerian South-South federal universities can be entrenched by teachers' adherence to the ethics of social justice and confidentiality. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that, teachers and administrators should face 21st century demands and adapt to tough academic and fiscal challenges by understanding the power of relational confidentiality and trust as an instructional tool for improving student performance. Furthermore, Institutional leaders and stake holders should ensure that teachers' professional development programmes focuses on enlightening teachers on how to integrate equity, activism, fairness, justice and the elimination of oppression in order to positively impact students' educational output.*

KEYWORDS: Confidentiality, educational output, federal universities, professional ethics, quality, social justice, teachers

INTRODUCTION

Ethics and morals relate to "right" and "wrong" conduct. While they are sometimes used interchangeably, they are different. Ethics can be said to refer to rules provided by an external source, for instance, codes of conduct in work places or principles in religions. Morals on the other hand, refer to an individual's own principles regarding right and wrong. Ethics can be described as a set of moral principles that an individual, profession, group, organization, or community decides to adhere strictly to. It deals with ideas about what behaviour is morally good and bad. Professional ethics is a collection of values, standards and norms that every individual regarded as a professional should consider. The rationale for the introduction of code of professional ethics to the teaching profession is to guide teachers' behaviour, attitude, dress sense, mannerism in speech, job performance, private and social life patterns. This in turn guides students' total growth and development, making them competent, functional, well-adjusted and

sociable. The teaching profession, just like every other profession has ethical norms, values, and standards that all teachers should be committed to in the course of carrying out their duties. Teaching may be considered as a highly challenging profession in its own path, and one that needs great professional proficiency. In a broad sense, the purpose of the code of ethics in educational institutions stimulates honesty and integrity as well as the well-being of the society.

Quality educational output in higher educational institutions especially in Sub Saharan Africa where Nigeria is a part of seems to be declining, and this has elicited great concern in recent times. Educational output is the direct effect on the students in relation to their knowledge acquisition, skills, beliefs and attitudes. Quality on the other hand has been defined as the ability or degree with which a product, service or phenomenon conforms to an established standard, and which makes it to be relatively superior to others (Obadara & Alaka, 2013). It therefore means that quality educational output refers to graduates with high standards, quality results, high educational prowess, impeccable moral and ethical traits, competitive skills, and superlative competence. Educational output is greatly influenced by the environment, content and process that learners encounter in school which leads to diverse results, some intended and others unintended. Observing students' graduation grade (output) in Nigerian federal universities, a high number of students graduate with pass, third class and second class lower grades, while very few students graduate with first class and second class upper grade. This poor-quality output from students appears to be quite persistent and there seems to be no noticeable improvement on the quality of output. The low-quality output may probably be attributed to teachers' non-adherence to the professional ethics of social justice and confidentiality as examined in this study.

Social justice is a notion that coexists with the expression of fairness, human rights, equality, and social inclusion. Although the principle of justice is widely discussed as one of the moral values, professional ethics also talks specifically about social justice. As defined by Ife (2010: p148), "social justice refers to the concept of a society in which justice is achieved in every aspect of society, rather than merely through the administration of law. It is generally considered as a social world which affords individuals and groups fair treatment, equality and an impartial share of the benefits of membership of society". Social justice involves equitably applying classroom policies to all students, provision of objectives and requirements for assessment beforehand, fair evaluation of students' knowledge of materials covered in the course and fostering in-class participation from all students.

Confidentiality entails respecting the privacy of others and the confidentiality of information gained in the course of professional practice. As defined by Clifford and Burke (2009), confidentiality means respecting private and personal information, unless there are overriding ethical reasons for not doing so. In today's age of privacy laws, teachers have more responsibility to protect students' privacy than what was obtainable in time past. According to University of California Irvine (UCI), confidentiality pertains to the treatment of information that an individual has disclosed in a relationship of trust and with the expectation that it will not be divulged to others without permission in ways that are inconsistent with the understanding of the original disclosure (UCI, 2016). Ethics spells out confidentiality responsibility in grades and medical information, but dangerous information that alludes to behaviours like abuse, suicide, drug and alcohol use must be disclosed. Sharing student information always needs to be done in such a way that the dignity of the student and parent, and the integrity of the school core team and student relationship are preserved. This can be accomplished without an

overriding commitment to confidentiality. If there is a strong confidentiality bond between a teacher and a student, the student is likely to improve academically.

In recent times, there has been an outcry over the quality of graduates produced by Nigerian federal universities. Nigerian Institute of Personnel Management (NIPM) as cited in Anho (2011) noted that the quality of graduates from Nigerian universities is declining rapidly. Anho (2011) also cited the report of National Employers Consultative Association (NECA) which decried the quality of Nigerian university graduates who they argue, 'do not meet the demands of industry'. Okebukola as cited in Yusuf, Ajidadga, Agbonna and Olumorin (2010) maintained that graduates of Nigerian faculties of education, for example, are inadequately prepared in both content and pedagogy, hence they cannot teach well or at worse, impact wrong knowledge which contribute negatively to the quality of students they produce. Otokunefor (2011) corroborated the position by arguing that many university lecturers could not justify their degrees in the classrooms. This negative trend is quite catastrophic and is quite evident in the myriad of ethical misconduct being exhibited by these graduates in form of social vices such as armed robbery, kidnapping, terrorism, and so on. These graduates eventually turn out to become professionals who lack moral character and ability to adhere to the code of ethics guiding their profession. Presumably, teachers seem to be low on social responsibility, equality behaviour and degree of confidentiality regarding students' disclosures and matters. These have greatly contributed to low quality output since a large number of teachers seem to have poor knowledge of the code of ethics binding the teaching profession, while some that are aware of the code seems not to adhere to them.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study adopted Walberg's Theory of Educational Productivity by Walberg (1981), and adapted it to educational output in universities. The theory posits that the psychological characteristics of individual students and their immediate psychological environments influence educational output and outcome (cognitive, behaviour and attitude). Walberg's research identified nine key variables that influence educational outcomes as; student ability/prior achievement, motivation, age/developmental level, quantity of instruction, quality of instruction, classroom climate, home environment, peer group, and exposure to mass media outside of school. Walberg's theory further postulated that to increase educational productivity, educational process goals as well as achievement goals must be considered. Educational goals are interpreted to include students' perceptions of the social environment, creativity, self-concept, and interest in subject matter. Ignoring these perceptions and experiences in favour of traditional goals measured by test scores will decrease motivation and ultimately lower educational achievement. This theory was considered relevant to this study because it integrates individual (teachers) and institutional (ethics) variables that can impact students' educational output. The theory goes further to explain linkages that exist among learning variables and student's educational output. Specifically, the theoretical model includes characteristics of the learner, the learning environment and the quality of instruction the learner receives. An improvement in the more direct and more alterable factors like teachers' adherence to the ethics of social justice and confidentiality holds the best hope for increasing educational productivity and output.

Social Justice

Justice, as defined by American Counselling Association (ACA), is the act of treating individuals equitably and fostering fairness and equality (ACA, 2014). Social justice has to do with being fair and providing equal right and opportunity to all members of the society. As declared by Lane (2011), justice is about treating equals equally and only the equals as full citizens. Accordingly, Coninck, Culp and Taylor (2013) explained social justice as a political concept since it deals with the nature and structure of the state, an economic concept as it is concerned with equal distribution of goods and services within a society and again, as an ethical concept because it is grounded on ethical framework. Contemporary notions of social justice coexist with expressions of human rights, fairness and equality (Bates, 2007). Judgement about what is 'just', 'fair', 'deserved', or something one is 'entitled' to receive are a central social judgement which lies at the heart of people's feelings, attitudes, and behaviours in their interactions with others (Gabriel, 2014). Fairness is closely linked with trust and this is attributed to the fact that students are sensitive enough to discern when a teacher discriminates against them or treats them disparately. Teachers who are fair believe in each student's ability to learn, and they encourage each person to achieve at the highest possible level (Lumpkin, 2008). According to Turhan (2010: p670), the definition of social justice in education carries a situational and instantaneous quality and may be defined as "an intentional intervention that requires the moral use of power" by considering situational characteristics.

In examining social justice in education, Sturman as cited in Nelson, Creagh and Clarke (2012: p118) found that three aspects of social justice are required to achieve equity for the most disadvantaged: (1) a distributive component – equipping students so that they receive equality of opportunity both within current and post-education; (2) curricular justice – ensuring that curriculum design and enactment attends to the principles of social justice; and (3) a non-material component – equipping students with non-material goods and skills "such as decision making". In the social justice literature, particularly Young and Gewirtz as cited in Nelson et al (2012), the notion of distributive justice considers issues of access, specifically equality of access and participation. The literature notes that social justice occurs when all individuals have equal access to social, cultural, political and economic resources.

Turhan (2010) in a study aimed at determining the social justice perceptions of teacher candidates being trained in the Firat University Education Faculty in Turkey discovered that teacher candidates had high social sensitivity, but relatively lower social responsibility levels and equality behaviours. The analyses showed that their social justice perceptions differed meaningfully with respect to gender and their major area of study and therefore concluded that, having teachers who behave in accordance with the principle of equality is the most important issue for achieving social justice at schools. Recently, Shapira-Lishchinsky (2016) conducted a study titled "From Ethical Reasoning to Teacher Education for Social Justice" in Israel. Findings relating to aspects of care and justice were nested into three categories; 'democratic education,' 'culturally responsive,' and 'critical pedagogy'. The disparity noted among participants between perceived behaviours expected by educational policy and the perceived behaviours that they would choose concluded that teachers' professional development programmes should focus on social justice by learning how to integrate between justice and care.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an ethical principle associated with several professions and the teaching profession is not an exception. Confidentiality is an important ingredient for the establishment of trusting and effective relationships. Such relationships have been shown to positively impact student motivation and learning (Faye & Sharpe, 2008; Hattie, 2009; Roorda, Koomen, Spilt & Oort, 2011). Confidentiality as defined by Clifford and Burke (2009) is respecting private and personal information, unless there are overriding ethical reason for not doing. Teachers who adhere strongly to professional ethics of the profession are expected not to share the secrets entrusted to them by students, parents, colleagues and the institution. Sharing information with other colleagues who are not directly related to the student's situation, especially those interesting cases that one will just want to share with colleagues can be precarious. The Family Educational Records Protection Acts (FERPA) states that school officials must have a legitimate educational interest when sharing information (Ramirez, 2009). Ethical principle of confidentiality associated with teaching has also been established. For example, the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) has developed the ethical principles in university teaching. Principle six - confidentiality, highlights the following: "student grades, attendance records, and private communications are treated as confidential materials, and are released only with student consent, or for legitimate academic purposes, or if there are reasonable grounds for believing that releasing such information will be beneficial to the student or will prevent harm to others" (STLHE, n.d: p3). This highlights the importance of student-teacher confidentiality and places a great deal of expectation on teachers in this regard. The section goes on to state: "this principle suggests that students are entitled to the same level of confidentiality in their relationships with teachers as would exist in a lawyer-client or doctor-patient relationship. Violation of confidentiality in the teacher-student relationship can cause students to distrust teachers and to show decreased academic motivation..." (STLHE, n.d: p3).

Trustworthiness is a key characteristic of a teacher and to instill a sense of student trust and safety, both in and out of the classroom, some degree of confidentiality should ideally be in place. Maintenance of confidentiality breeds trust among parties involved and both parties acknowledge the sensitivity and importance of either's personal details. Within a trustful relationship, teachers can anticipate students' behaviour and feel more secure in their pedagogical decisions (Corlett, 2007), and students feel encouraged to actively participate in lessons without the fear of being compromised by the teacher (Gregory & Ripski, 2008). A teacher who passes out tests from highest grade to lowest may do harm by breaching confidentiality. Such action imply lack of respect for students' rights and needs.

Problems associated with lack of confidentiality are usually difficult to manage. Non-adherence can land some senior management in prison, attract huge fines, and cost organizations or institutions huge sum of money in litigation (Chandler, 2005). The universities also experience high labour turnover on account of academics disclosing confidential information or telling lies about colleagues or publicly criticizing or censoring them (Richards-Gustafson, 2013), and coercing or retaliating against other academics (Wile, 2013). The ethics of confidentiality must be clearly spelt out to all teachers and proper processes and procedures put in place to handle sensitive information as these procedures helps to prevent breach of confidentiality. They also give respect to privacy and ensure confidentiality (Zayatz, 2009). It is important to maintain current, accurate knowledge of all regulations related to privacy of student records and electronic transmission of records, and up-to-date knowledge of privacy legislation on a regular basis (American College Personnel Association (ACPA), 2006).

Harris and Dalton (2014) carried out a study on university student expectations of confidentiality when disclosing information to their professors. Students were asked to complete online survey scenarios assessing their expectations for confidentiality during various student-professor exchanges. Independent variables included professor discipline and disclosure location. Results concluded that students maintain a high degree of confidentiality expectations when making disclosures to their professors, especially when these disclosures happen in the professor's office. Amponsah, Boateng and Onuoha (2016) in their study on the consequences of nonconformity of accounting academics to confidentiality discovered that the most outstanding ramification to the nonconformity problem among accounting academics was increase in expensive lawsuits against the universities. The study concluded that students being assured of confidentiality by lecturers boosts their academic success and was recommended that universities should provide rules and regulations as well as incentives to ensure conformance to confidentiality by accounting academics as opposed to incurring cost of lawsuit as a result of nonconformity.

Besides the previous researches, the present study is worth doing because the literature on social justice and confidentiality, especially that on the relationship between social justice, confidentiality and student output, still lacks empirical support. This has created a gap which this study is poised to fill. Additionally, the results of this study can serve as an additional validation for practices aimed at fostering social justice and confidentiality of student information, especially in Nigerian federal universities in which research on such topic seems very rare or even not carried out. Hence, this study seeks to determine how professional ethics of social justice and confidentiality can be used to entrench quality educational output in federal universities, South-South Zone of Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Quality of educational output in Nigerian universities has become a serious concern to the society. A decline in educational output of students in federal universities has generated so much uproar among stakeholders in the education sector. The Nigerian Institute of Personnel Management (NIPM), National Employers of Consultative Association (NECA), and other similar organizations have decried and argued that the quality of graduates from Nigerian universities are rapidly declining and do not meet the demands of the industry. From observation, teachers seem not to equitably apply classroom policies to all students, protect students' confidential information, nor uphold students' dignity. They also seem to have poor knowledge of the ethics of social justice and confidentiality clause binding the teaching profession, let alone adhere to them. These invariably contributes negatively to the quality of graduates being churned out. An inspection of the graduating grades of graduates between 2014 and 2016 shows a high rate of Second Class Lower, Third Class and Pass degrees from universities. The National Universities Commission (NUC) in 2014 abolished the pass degree in Nigerian universities leaving the 'Third Class' as the least classification. This has brought the need for improved grades to the forefront. It has also been observed that whenever students have low quality results, the public tends to blame the failure on teachers. It is expected that schools should serve the intellectual, ethical, physical, social, and academic achievement needs of students. Unfortunately, most products from our universities graduate without these basic needs being met. One may wonder what is responsible for the apparent poor students' performance. Could this be traced to teachers having difficulty forming equal relationships with all students, unlawfully discriminating against any student, breaching the trust under which confidential information was shared, exposing students' data to unauthorized access, or what? The

fundamental problem of the study therefore is to examine how quality educational output can be entrenched in universities through professional ethics of social justice and confidentiality.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent of relationship between social justice and quality of educational output in federal universities, South-South Zone of Nigeria?
2. What is the extent of relationship between confidentiality and quality of educational output in federal universities, South-South Zone of Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between social justice and quality of educational output in federal universities, South-South Zone of Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between confidentiality and quality of educational output in federal universities, South-South Zone of Nigeria.

RESEARCH METHODS

The correlational research design was used for this study. This study adopted this design because it sought to determine if two or more variables are related, and if so, in what way. The South-South Zone of Nigeria was the area for this study. This area is one of the six Geo-Political Zones in the country. It is made up of six states namely; Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-River, Delta, Edo and Rivers. The population of the study comprised 6,305 teaching staff and 32,613 graduating students in the 2014/2015 academic session distributed into the six federal universities in the zone. The sample size of this study was 1,275 (20%) teaching staff and 3,517 (10%) students drawn from the sampled schools. To arrive at the sample size, the purposive sampling technique was used to select four out of the six universities that have graduated students in faculties and departments that cut across these universities. This comprised six faculties and 28 departments. From each of the sampled departments and faculties, simple random sampling method of balloting was used to select two departments each from the six faculties. This made up the sample size of 1,275 teaching staff and 3,517 students.

Two instruments were used for data collection in the study. One was researchers - developed questionnaire titled "Ethics of Social Justice and Confidentiality Questionnaire (ESJCQ)", while the second one was data on students' educational output (graduation grade) titled "Graduate Educational Output Checklist (GEOC)" gathered from the universities' relevant authorities. The ESJCQ was used to measure professional ethics of social justice and confidentiality, while the GEOC was used to measure the quality of educational output. The ESJCQ was a 14-item questionnaire (See Appendix) which utilized a five-point Likert scale where respondents were presented with five alternative response options of Very Often (VO - 5), Often (O - 4), Sometimes (S - 3), Rarely (R - 2), and Never (N - 1). The second instrument which was the GEOC covered 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 academic sessions. The content was the total number of students that graduated with first class, second class upper, second class lower, third class and pass degrees from the sampled universities in the years under review. The GEOC utilized a five-point Likert scale of Excellent (1st class - 5), Very Good (2nd class upper - 4), Good (2nd class lower - 3), Fair (3rd class - 2) and Poor (Pass - 1). A combination of the scores from the professional ethics of social justice and confidentiality variables, as well as the graduates'

educational output checklist were analyzed to determine the correlation coefficient between the two variables.

The ESJCQ was subjected to face validation by three research experts from the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo. In order to establish the internal consistency (reliability) of the instrument, the inter item correlation method was used to measure its ability involving 50 teaching staff who were not part of the study sample. After the appropriate scoring of the responses, the result was subjected to Cronbach Alpha Analysis which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.83. A consent form containing information about the research were initially given to the teaching staff to fill before the researchers-developed questionnaire – ESJCQ was administered with the help of two research assistants for each of the sampled universities who were briefed on what to do.

The data from the two instruments were sorted, compiled, classified and coded into a coding sheet and analyzed using a computerized data analysis package known as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). In analyzing the data collected from the respondents, coefficient of R value and R^2 were used to answer the research questions, while the f-value of Simple Linear Regression Analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. In scoring the ESJCQ, the positive worded statements were weighted 5,4,3,2,1, moving from VO to N, while the negative worded statements were scored in the reverse direction, the weights moving from 1 to 5. The second instrument (GEOC) being data on graduates' educational output (graduation grade) were gathered through validated checklist from the universities' relevant authorities and were classified under Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair and Poor weighing 5,4,3,2,1. In testing the research hypotheses, the f - calculated was compared with the f - critical at 0.05 level of significance. The research hypotheses were rejected when the calculated f - value was greater than the critical f - value, and were retained when the critical f - value was greater than the calculated f - value. The f - values were used to test and determine the degree of significance of the regression coefficient (R).

RESULTS

Research Question One: What is the extent of relationship between social justice and quality of educational output in federal universities, South-South Zone of Nigeria?

Table 1a: Result of R and R^2 coefficient of Simple Linear Regression Analysis for the extent of relationship between social justice and quality of educational output (n = 1275)

Variables	Sum of Squares	R	R^2	Std. Error	% Contribution of R	Remark
Social Justice	5064.417	0.539	0.291	3.11505	29.1%	Moderate
Quality of Output	12352.621					

Source: Researchers' Field Data (2019).

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between social justice and quality of educational output in federal universities, South-South Zone of Nigeria.

Table 1b: Result of Simple Linear Regression Analysis for the relationship between social justice and quality of educational output (n = 1275)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-cal	F-crit	Decision
Regression	5064.417	1	5064.417	521.91	3.84	Reject Ho ₁
Residual	12352.621	1273	9.704			
Total	17417.038	1274				

a. Dependent Variable: Quality of Output

b. Predictors: (Constant), Social Justice

R = 0.539, R² = 0.291, df = (n-2), Sig. at P ≤ 0.05

Result in Table 1a shows R for the linear correlation coefficient and R² for the determination of the extent of relationship between social justice and quality of education output. The R – value of 0.539 indicates a moderate and positive relationship between the two variables. The calculated R² of 0.291 which is the coefficient of determination indicates that 29.1% variation in quality of educational output is explained by teachers' display of social justice. This means that, social justice relates to quality of educational output. The result in Table 1b shows that the calculated F- value of 521.91 is greater than the critical F- value of 3.84 at 0.05 level of significance with 1 and 1273 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between social justice and quality of educational output is therefore rejected in favour of the alternate one. This means that the quality of educational output in Nigerian South-South federal universities is determined by teachers' display of social justice.

Research Question Two: What is the extent of relationship between confidentiality and quality of educational output in federal universities, South-South Zone of Nigeria?

Table 2a: Result of R and R² coefficient of Simple Linear Regression Analysis for the extent of relationship between confidentiality and quality of educational output (n = 1275)

Variables	Sum of Squares	R	R ²	Std. Error	% Contribution of R	Remark
Confidentiality	4373.073	0.501	0.251	3.20104	25.1%	Moderate
Quality of Output	13043.964					

Source: Researchers' Field Data (2019).

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between confidentiality and quality of educational output in federal universities, South-South Zone of Nigeria.

Table 2b: Result of Simple Linear Regression Analysis for the relationship between confidentiality and quality of educational output (n = 1275)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-cal	F-crit	Decision
Regression	4373.073	1	4373.073			
Residual	13043.964	1273	10.247	426.78	3.84	Reject Ho ₂
Total	17417.038	1274				

a. Dependent Variable: Quality of Output

b. Predictors: (Constant), Confidentiality

R = 0.501, R² = 0.251, df = (n-2), Sig. at P ≤ 0.05

Result in Table 2a shows R for the linear correlation coefficient and R² for the determination of the extent of relationship between confidentiality and quality of education output. The R – value of 0.501 indicates a moderate and positive relationship between the two variables. The calculated R² of 0.251 which is the coefficient of determination indicates that 25.1% variation in quality of educational output is explained by teachers' adherence to the ethics of confidentiality. This means that, teachers' adherence to the ethics of confidentiality relates to quality of educational output. The result in Table 2b shows that the calculated F- value of 426.78 is greater than the critical F- value of 3.84 at 0.05 level of significance with 1 and 1273 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between confidentiality and quality of educational output is therefore rejected in favour of the alternate one. This means that the quality of educational output in Nigerian South-South federal universities is determined by teachers' adherence to the ethics of confidentiality.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Social Justice and Quality of Educational Output

The result of the analysis presented in hypothesis one reveals that there is a significant relationship between teachers' display of social justice and quality of educational output. This finding is in consonance with the finding made by earlier referenced researchers; McGlone and Aronson (2007) who provided a strong argument in favor of school-based analysis of societal and educational inequity. The findings also suggest that teaching about oppression, equity and activism is likely to positively impact the academic achievement of marginalized students. In support of this, Goddard, LoGerfo and Hoy (2004) found the collective efficacy of a school's faculty to be the strongest predictor of student achievement after controlling for socioeconomic status, minority enrollment, urbanicity, size, and prior student achievement. The finding also coincides with the finding made by Gutstein (2007) in a study that quantitatively assesses the impact of standards-based teaching for social justice on students' academic, behavioural/motivational, and attitudinal outcomes. The research conclusively demonstrates that it is possible to teach for social justice in a standards-based, academically rigorous environment and to do so in a way that promotes positive academic and attitudinal outcomes.

In further support of this finding is the view of Slee (2010) who observed that teachers committed to social justice and inclusion must be capable of building appropriate professional relations with students and other actors in order to respond adequately to students' diverse needs. Also in agreement with this finding is that made by Hattie (2009) who posited that the strategic idea of teachers as change agents in reducing educational inequalities is linked to research showing teachers are the most significant in-school factor influencing student achievement. This can be interpreted to imply that teachers have a role to play as agents of social justice.

Confidentiality and Quality of Educational Output

The result of the analysis presented in hypothesis two reveals that there is a significant relationship between teachers' adherence to the ethics of confidentiality and quality of educational output. In consonance with this, the finding by Amponsah, Boateng and Onuoha (2016) in their study on the consequences of nonconformity of academics to confidentiality concluded that students being assured of confidentiality by lecturers boosts their academic success. This finding also coincides with earlier finding by Durnford (2010) in a qualitative study which explored the trust relationship between middle school teachers and students. The study revealed that when the students demonstrated the willingness to be vulnerable, open, and competent, teachers adjusted their roles, methodology choices, and behaviour choices to meet the needs of their students. This implies that, when teacher-student trust exists, student achievement levels increased. This is also supported by the finding of Lee (2007) in a study to determine the correlation between trust and student achievement. The results indicated statistically significant findings that correlated to high trust student-teacher relationships and improved student performance.

In line with the finding of this study also, Gamage, Adams and McCormack (2009) stated that effective school management spends considerable time holding teachers responsible for student performances while encouraging them to establish more trusting relationships. Also, in agreement with this finding is that made by Tschannen-Moran (2004) who identified five facets of trust to be benevolence - which refers to the confidence people have in one another; honesty - which means integrity; openness - which means that a person would not withhold information or distort information; reliability - which refers to the confidence to predict another person's actions; and competence - which refers to skill levels. Tschannen-Moran further argued that all five facets must be present to establish a trusting relationship. This implies that teachers and students need to practice these five facets of trust with each other in order to build a more trusting relationship and accomplish higher performance levels.

On the contrary, Basch (2012) in a study to explore the correlation between the levels of trust between teachers and students, and the student performance levels, declared that the results were not statistically significant, and the events, relational trust and student performance were considered not correlated. The study's findings also implied that the relationship between trust levels and student performance levels were weak. Although trust may be important, trust does not have a positive, significant correlation to student performance. In support of this also is the finding of Williams (2008) who found that if trust is compromised between teacher and student, the teacher may react by treating the student differently and this may hinder students' quality academic performance.

CONCLUSION

Teachers' professional ethics of social justice and confidentiality has been identified by quite a number of scholars to be very crucial to the entrenchment of quality educational output. The key finding of this study is that the entrenchment of quality educational output in federal universities, South-South Zone of Nigeria, is not doubt influenced by teachers' professional ethics of social justice and confidentiality. In view of the findings of this study, it is safe to conclude that teachers improved awareness and adherence to the professional ethics of social justice and maintenance of student-teacher confidentiality, will significantly improve the quality of students' educational output in federal universities, South-South zone and in all other federal universities in Nigeria and beyond.

Recommendations

1. Institutional leaders and stake holders should ensure that teachers' professional development programmes focuses on enlightening teachers on how to integrate equity, activism, fairness, justice and the elimination of oppression in order to positively impact students' educational output.
2. Teachers and administrators should face 21st century demands and adapt to tough academic and fiscal challenges by understanding the power of relational confidentiality and trust as an instructional tool for improving student performance.

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APPENDIX**ETHICS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND CONFIDENTIALITY QUESTIONNAIRE (ESJCQ)**

1. Name of Institution

2. Name of Faculty

3. Name of Department

S/N	ITEMS					
Social Justice		VO	O	S	R	N
1.	I respect the dignity of my students					
2.	I act impartially towards my students					
3.	I promote a diversity tolerant learning environment					
4.	I refrain from unlawfully discriminating against any student					
5.	I experience difficulty in enforcing the same rule for all students					
6.	I do not respect the opinions of my students					
7.	I find it challenging to maintain equal relationships with all students					
Confidentiality		VO	O	S	R	N
8.	I keep the trust under which students' confidential information is exchanged					
9.	I create a situation whereby my students can trust me in the classroom					
10.	I securely store students' relevant data to avoid unauthorized access					
11.	I obtain students' consent before sharing their information with third parties					
12.	I share students' results with third parties					
13.	I discuss students' private matter with me in class					
14.	I divulge students' confidential matter to my colleagues					