

**IMPACT OF TEACHER'S PERSONALITY ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF BIOLOGY STUDENTS IN OGBA-EGBEMA-NDONI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, RIVERS STATE**

**ERIKWE, O. Q; DIRISU, C.G\* Ph.D ; & OGUNBAYO, O. G.**

Department of Biology Education,

School of Science ,

Federal College of Education (Technical) Omoku, Rivers state, Nigeria

\*Corresponding Email: [chimezie-dirisu@fctomoku.edu.ng](mailto:chimezie-dirisu@fctomoku.edu.ng)

### **Abstract**

*Recent results of Senior Secondary Schools (SSS) Biology shows a decline in achievement, even those who take the exams, scale through with mere passing grades with no distinction. This study is therefore an attempt to investigate learner's achievement in Biology with respect to teacher factors. The characteristics of the biology teacher (BT) under examination are subject mastery, skill set, attitude to work and degree of job satisfaction. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire administered to 312 respondents, consisting of 300 SSS students studying Biology and 12 BTs. The respondents were randomly selected from six (6) schools in Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni Local Government Area (ONELGA), Rivers State. Data was analyzed by descriptive statistics and a mean score of 2.50 was considered significant for the TF under consideration. Results indicate grand mean scores as follows: relationship between BTs' subject mastery and learners' performance ( $3.87 > 2.25$ ), relationship between BTs' skill set and learners' performance ( $2.95 > 2.5$ ); relationship between the biology teachers' attitude to work and learners' performance ( $2.87 > 2.5$ ), relationship between BTs' job satisfaction and learners' academic performance ( $2.53 > 2.50$ ). The results show that teacher personality factors such as subject mastery, skill set and attitude to work influence the performance of Biology students in Senior Secondary Schools in ONELGA, Rivers State.*

**Keywords:** *Academic achievement, Attitude, Biology Teacher (BT), Personality.*

### **Introduction**

Teaching reflects teachers' personality that affects all aspect of learning and teaching, as sources of interest. Polk (2006) in Ehsan & Nabiallah (2017) asserted that what teachers accomplish is affected by his personal individuality; and what teachers do and believe will also affect the students' achievement. Also, teachers' personality influences his achievement of educational goals. Good and qualified teachers are needed for educational system to function efficiently and to enhance learning quality. A good teacher plays his part in the classroom and require effective and efficient teaching competencies (Markley, 2004 in Ehsan & Nabiallah, 2017). This finding hold true for the instructional delivery process of Sciences, particularly Biology. Teachers also have important roles to play in learners' achievement (Rockoff, 2004 in Ehsan & Nabiallah, 2017).

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The extent of teaching effectiveness is dependent on the teacher's personality. The Biology teacher's personality comprises many facets but this study investigated three, which includes knowledge of subject matter, skill set and attitude to work. Ali (2009) in Ehsan and Nabiallah (2017) and Olaleye (2011) observed that teachers' characteristics and students' academic achievement was significantly related. Akinsolu (2010) asserts that the availability of qualified teachers determined the performance of students in schools. On teachers' personality, Adu and Olatundun (2007) in Ehsan and Nabiallah (2017) contend that teachers' characteristics strongly affect students' performance in the secondary schools because teachers have a lot of influence.

The Biology teachers' knowledge of subject matter is crucial as high-quality teaching depends on ability of the teacher to understand the subject they are teaching. Knowledge of the concept structure and sequence enable the teacher to develop factual knowledge needed for each subject and guide their students through teaching and learning process. Lack of expertise, with regards to knowledge of subject, on the Biology teachers' side accumulate into poor quality of teaching, and of learning, hence, students' performance is at risk. A study by the National College for Teaching and Leadership revealed that knowledge of subject include both knowing the content and understanding how to teach the subject. Mohd Zhaffar et al., (2016) is of the opinion that to produce teachers with good subject mastery of knowledge, requires combining the existing knowledge, experience as well as common sense. Teachers should be able to formulate and state their position in certain issues. Methods of mastering subject knowledge include engaging in discussion with peers, presenting papers to experts, delivering lectures, writing scientific journal articles and books as well as reading of internet resources (Abdullah & Jasmi, 2016).

The Biology teacher should have specific abilities in order to impact positively on their students' performance. Some relevant teaching skills include instructional methodology, use of instructional materials, classroom management and questioning. Effective teaching depends on both teacher's knowledge as well as method of communication. According to Khan et al., (2017) teacher communication skills plays important role in student's academic achievement. Poor communication skills leads to student's failure (Jakhanwal, 2021).

Mucella et al., (2011) posit that student's performance is not entirely due to their work. Performance is affected by many factors such as teacher's attitude. Attitude to work determines one's work performance. It has been observed that the Nigerian civil servants have poor attitude to work, which impinges on their job performance. This fact laid the basic fact that many employees lack appropriate training, which do not motivate staff to do well in their daily work in the schools and other organizations. While the role of teachers' work for student outcomes is widely recognized, the question whether teachers are content with their working environment is often overlooked (Bascia & Rottmann, 2011).

Teachers influence the academic achievement of students and they play a vital role in their educational attainment because it is the teacher's duty formulate policies and principles based on appropriate practice when interacting with the students (Afe, 2001 in Ehsan & Nabiallah, 2017). Teaching and learning depend on the effective teacher who is seen as the one that may produce desired results in the course of his duty (Uchefuna, 2001 in Ehsan & Nabiallah, 2017). Literatures abound to support the fact that teachers have play significant role in students' achievement (Sadeghi & Nikou, 2012). This study focuses on identifying some aspects of the Biology teacher's personality and how they will influence teaching effectiveness.

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## Statement of Problem

The challenge of poor academic performance in Nigerian Secondary schools has spark off much interest amongst stakeholders in the educational sector. Educational quality has not kept abreast to the expansion in enrolment. Although, this continues to be a global concern, it is a general belief that the teachers' personality affects students' performance. Competence of Specialist teachers has been one of great concern, in recent times. As there is rise in number of untrained and unlicensed individuals in the classroom masquerading themselves as educational professionals. This affects the quality of teaching, as the teacher can only deliver lessons to the best of his/her knowledge. In this case, very minimal. Another concern is employment of half-baked Biology graduate teachers.

It is one thing to have mastery over subject matter, as a Biology teacher. Still, it is a different thing to be able to transmit the curriculum content to the learners. A successful instructional delivery process requires certain skill set such as teaching methods, use of learning aids, understanding of individuality, psychology, communication, etc. Sadly, most Biology teachers are void of this skills. A successful teaching and learning relationship always start with the students being inspired to want to learn. This takes a dedicated teacher to understand each child and his or her needs and then adapt the learning materials to suit the child's learning styles. However, when the portrays indifferent attitude towards his work, it will reflect on the student's. performance. Students always need to be motivated and supervised regularly especially in the secondary school level A satisfied teacher is a motivated teacher. Most teachers of Biology do not derive satisfaction from work. Due to meager pay, hostile working conditions, absence of incentives, and this reflected on the students they instruct. It is imperative to evaluate the how personality of the teacher relates to students' achievement in Biology. As, there has been no such research done in ONELGA, this research work was carried out to ascertain the impact of teachers' knowledge of subject matter (Biology), skills and attitude on the student's academic performance in Biology.

## Purpose of the study

1. To ascertain the impact of teacher's knowledge of subject matter on student's academic performance in Biology.
2. To ascertain the impact of teacher's skill set on student's academic performance in Biology.
3. To investigate the extent to which teacher's attitude to work affect student's performance in Biology

## Research questions

1. Is there any significant relationship between teachers' knowledge of subject matter and students' academic achievement in Biology?
2. Is there any significant relationship between teachers' skill sets and students' achievement in Biology?
3. Is there any significant relationship between teachers' attitude to work and students' achievement in Biology?

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## Research Hypotheses

H<sub>01</sub>: Biology teachers' knowledge of subject matter does not significantly influence students' academic achievement in Biology

H<sub>02</sub>: Biology teachers' skill sets and students' achievement are not significantly related

H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant relationship between attitude of Biology teacher to work and students' achievement.

## Significance of the Study

The result of this study will help teachers to recognize how their personality will enhance students' achievement in Biology. Although there are other factors which contribute to the achievement of the students, Biology teachers need to be cognizant of the fact that their personality will have positive and negative effects on the achievements of their students. This study is significant since it would help teachers to think of their personality; achieve subject mastery, gain skills and techniques to enhance learning experience, put forward a more positive attitude towards work, and enjoy job satisfaction (as students achievement increases).

This study will be of significant to educational stakeholders as they will be better enlightened on how to address the issue of falling standard of education by organizing orientation and re-orientation programs for teachers, schemes for incentives or bonuses, ward programs for recognition of work done, etc. It will be of use to Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders in educational to develop strategies to curb academic laxity. It will also serve as point of reference for researcher, scholars, etc, as this work would add to the pool of knowledge concerning teacher personality and students academic performance, particularly, in the local government area.

## Concept clarification

### Teacher and teacher personality

According to Mkpanang (2015), teachers are central to students' learning process. A Biology teacher like every other teacher plays many roles/ These include guiding, counseling, disciplining, developing curriculum and evaluating outcome, organizing extra-curricular activities, being an administrator, custodian, researcher, Innovator et cetera.

Personality is derived from the Latin word "charm", which means mask, face shield or even a sound (personae). The purpose of this refers to the outward appearance of an individual. Binti (2014) posits that personality includes such scope as thoughts, perceptions, values, attitudes, character, ability, confidence, intelligence, motivation and habits. It also include characters, beliefs and what makes a person unique. It is constant and structured collection of mental traits and mechanism of human beings, which influence their communication physical, psychological and social environment. Arbabisarjou et al., (2016) characterized personality as a compound and a set of fixed and stable qualities of an individual which distinguishes him from others. Kırkağaç and Öz (2017) opined that personality encompasses beliefs, passion and conduct of an individual with mental and spiritual instruments. Onyekuru and Ibegbunam (2015) said that personality traits are characterized as a whole of the ordinary and persevering methods for acting, thinking and feeling that makes a man moderately reliable in all circumstances. Teachers with good personality can

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encourage their students' learning environment and thus improve their achievements as it fosters friendliness.

### **Academic Performance**

Academic performance is the direct result of learning, prompted by the teaching activity by the teacher and produced by the student. Martinez (2007) in Lamas (2015), stated that academic performance is "the product given by the students and it is usually expressed through school grades" According to Caballero et al., (2007) in Lamas (2015), academic performance involves meeting goals, achievements and objectives set in the programme or course that a student attends following an assessment that involves passing or not certain tests, subjects or courses. On their part,) Academic performance is generally measured using the grade point average (Torres and Rodríguez (2006) in Willcox, (2011). When there is a gap between academic performance and student's expected performance, it is referred to as diverging performance. Academic performance below the expected performance is deemed unsatisfactory. Student achievement is measured at the end of the learning period, term, academic calendar or at the end of a programme. The level of academic achievement of a learner is determined based on assignment, test/examination scores, and marks or grades assigned by the instructor, teacher or examiner. In recent years, achievement in Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) has drawn the consideration of all stakeholders in education. The decline in academic accomplishment of students in biology is reflected yearly in students' result published by the examination bodies. The 2002 – 2012, West African Examination Council (WAEC) Annual Report indicated the percentage pass of students who passed biology obtaining a credit (A1 - C6) for the past eleven years (2002 -2012) in Nigeria were 31.52%, 44.15%, 24.69%, 35.04%, 48.60%, 33.37%, 33.94%, 33.87%, 33.90%, 38.50%, and 38.82% respectively. This shows that for the past eleven years the biology achievement of students' has been below fifty percent. Biology is a mandatory subject for any science- oriented course, thus it has developed advancement as it concerns the field of forensic science, genetic engineering and medicine. In spite of its importance however, the performance of students has reduced drastically at senior secondary school level (Ahmed, 2008 in Amakiru & Ukwuije, 2016). These results indicates that there is more work to be done to avert this poor academic achievement among students. Some researchers attribute low academic achievement to failure of parents to pay attention to their children needs, leading to less emphasies on studies, unregulated television and and addiction to internet viewing,y addiction to Facebook and mobile phones (Ajayi in Adewusi, 2013).

### **Teacher's Personality and Academic Performance**

The successful use of a teacher's personality is vital in conducting instructional activities. Personality aids teaching, for communication takes place between the teacher and the learner even in the absence of the spoken word (nonverbal communication). The teacher is said to have an enviable teaching personality if he creates and preserve a classroom or learning environment for the students to feel contented and provoked to learn (Callahan, 1966 in Ehsan & Nabiallah, 2017). According to Canto-Herrera & Salazar-Carballo (2010), students' performance depends on the delivery of instruction. Teachers' commitment is also an important aspect to increase school students' motivation and performance. Students follow their teachers because they idolize them and this helps in developing positive personality characteristics among them. The Biology teachers do not only play their effective role in developing students' knowledge and educational attainment

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but also eradicate their ineffective attitudes, behaviours and personality traits. The personality trait of teachers and its influence on academic performance of students have been studied (Eyong et al., 2014; Leephijaroen, 2016; Noreen et al., 2019). Unfortunately, empirical studies on teacher's personality behaviour and students' performance in biology is scarce. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study have attempted to address this gap in literature. Majority of the studies done were in western countries. This indeed is a great challenge because the biology teacher's personality and its resultant effect on the student's academic performance has not been explored in senior secondary schools in ONELGA. This therefore create the need for this current study to fill this gap.

## Methodology

### Design of the Study

The study design adopted was the descriptive survey. It sought to get responses from biology teachers as regards to the present study.

### Study population and Sample

The study population consisted of all biology teachers and students in the senior secondary schools (SSS) in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area (ONELGA) of Rivers State. The sample size was three hundred and twelve (312) respondents, which comprised twelve (12) Biology teachers and 300 students in SSS 1-3 from six (6) randomly selected schools in the study area. The schools are Community Secondary School, Obite; Goshen Comprehensive College, Omoku; Egbema Grammar School, Okwuzi; St Mary's Group of Schools, Mgbede; Community Senior Secondary School, Ase-Azaga, Ndoni and Brilliant Child Academy, Ase-Azaga, Ndoni.

### Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire entitled, "Effect of Teacher Personality on Students Academic Performance in Biology in Senior Secondary Schools in ONELGA, Rivers State Questionnaire". The questionnaire contained sixteen (16) items, that is, four (4) items to each research question. The questionnaire was based on 4 points rating scale with response options of Strongly Agree (SA = 4 points), Agree (A= 3 points), Disagree (D = 2 points), and Strongly Disagree (SD = 1 point) for all research questions.

### Reliability of the Instrument

Split-half reliability method was used to elicit the reliability of the instrument. The split was based on odd versus even- numbered items (of all twelve teachers for the pilot test). The test was conducted once, and retrieved from testees after they are done within two weeks.

### Method of Data Analysis

Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics, Mean score  $\geq 2.50$  was accepted for the item under consideration while mean score  $<2.50$  was rejected. Student t-test was used to determine if significant difference exist for positive and negative responses at 0.05 alpha level.

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**Results**

**Research Question One:** To what extent does teacher’s knowledge of subject matter affect academic performance of Biology students?

**Table 1a: Respondents’ Mean Score on the impact of Teacher Knowledge of Subject Matter on Students Academic Performance in Biology in ONELGA, Rivers State.**

S/N	Item	Response Option				ΣFX	Mean	Decision
		SA	A	D	SD			
1.	You are good at delivering lessons/biology teacher is good at delving lessons	212	30	20	50	312	3.3	Accepted
2.	You relate lessons to everyday life experiences. /Biology teacher relates lessons to everyday life experience.	108	54	50	100	312	2.5	Accepted
3.	You are always able to answer questions asked during lesson, satisfactory. /Biology teacher is always able to answer questions asked during lessons satisfactory	192	80	30	10	312	3.5	Accepted
4.	You could be better as a teacher in explain lessons. /You would perform better academically, if lessons were better explained	102	96	50	64	312	2.5	Accepted
5.	You are abreast with newest inventions and discoveries in biology. /Biology teacher has current knowledge in the subject	210	40	40	22	312	3.4	Accepted

The result in Table 1a shows that mean score of the five items is  $\geq 2.50$  and hence accepted. Summing up positive responses (S+A) and negative responses (SD+D) indicate a mean of  $3.60 > 1.46$ , thus, the respondents agree that teachers’ mastery of subject matter positively influence student’s academic performance in biology.

**Table 1b. T-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means**

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 positive - negative	.44000	.28390	.12696	.08749	.79251	3.466	4	.026

It was hypothesized that there will be no significant influence of Teachers' Subject Mastery on students’ achievement in Biology. T-test statistics in Table 1b shows that  $p, -026 < 0.05$ , hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, Teachers' Subject Mastery has significant influence on students’ achievement in Biology.

**Research Question Two:** What is the impact of teachers skill sets on the academic performance of students in biology in ONELGA, Rivers State?

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**Table 2a: Respondents Mean Score on the Impact of Teacher Skill Set on Students Academic Performance in Biology in ONELGA, Rivers State**

S/N	Item	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Total	Mean	Decision
6	You communicate lessons in a way that the concepts are understood easily /Biology teacher communicates lesson in a way that you understand concepts easily	111	100	37	64	312	2.83	Accepted
7	You would teach better if there were fewer distractions during lessons. /You would learn better if there were fewer distractions during lessons	212	50	50	0	312	3.36	Accepted
8	Students would performance better in biology is lesson were taught in different teaching method. /I would performance better in biology if lessons were taught n different methods	102	100	53	57	312	2.79	Accepted
9	You could teach better if teaching aids, documentaries, etc) were used during lesson. /You would learn better if teaching aids were used.	212	89	9	2	312	3.64	Accepted
10	You ask questions that makes students think deeply during lesson. /Biology teacher ask questions that makes you think deeply during lessons	72	101	79	60	312	2.14	Rejected

The result indicates that the grand mean score of 2.95 shows that respondents are of the opinion that the biology teachers' skill set influence the academic performance of students in biology in ONELGA .

**Table 2b. T-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means**

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 positive - negative	.47200	.32576	.14568	.06751	.87649	3.240	4	.032

Table 2b shows that t stat (3.24) is significant ( $p, .032 > .05$ ), therefore Teacher Skill Set significantly influence academic performance in Biology

**Research Question Three:** What is the impact of the Biology teacher’s attitude to work on student academic performance in ONELGA, Rivers State?

**Table 3a: Respondents Mean Score on the influence of the Biology Teachers Attitude to Work on the Academic Performance of students in Senior Secondary Schools in Biology in ONELGA, Rivers State**

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S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	Decision
1	You have a pleasant disposition towards to work. /Biology teacher has a pleasant disposition towards work	198	77	20	17	312	3.75	Agree
2	You motivate students to learn and perform better academically. /Biology teacher motivates you to learn and perform better academically	64	19	100	79	312	2.38	Disagree
3	You would like your students to pursue a career in biology or in a related field. /I would like to pursue a career in biology or a related field.	51	104	150	7	312	2.67	Agreed
4	You would rather not teach biology. /You would prefer to remove biology from the list of subjects of you lean.	63	100	70	79	312	2.47	Disagreed
5	Students would perform my attitude towards teaching biology improved. /You would perform better if the biology teachers attitude towards teaching improve	109	150	30	23	312	3.11	Agreed

Table 3a shows that the respondents are of the opinion that the biology teachers behaviour influences the learners' school achievement. Two out of five items are antithetical to the opinion of the respondents, as a these two items happen to fall below the cult off point of 2.50. Generally, respondents agree that the student's academic can be determined by the teacher's disposition towards works, as the mean of the question was calculated to be 2.87, above the cutoff point.

Findings from the data analyzed in Table 1a indicates that the teachers' knowledge of subject matter affects students' performance in Biology to a high extent. Biology teacher can only teach what he/she knows. Being well grounded in the concepts and ideas of one's discipline is paramount to transmitting the said knowledge and skills to learners with respect to cognitive level, intelligence and individuality. It is even better when biology teacher can breakdown or relate complex or abstract ideas to everyday life experiences as this increases the chances of the lesson been understood; which is the first step toward high achievement in academics. Moreover, the BT with mastery over subject is a confident teacher. The result of the study agrees with that of Ehindera and Ajibade (2000) in Fakeye (2012) who reported that a significant relationship between student's perception of subject matter knowledge of teachers and academic their performance.

The finding in table 2b indicates a significant relationship between Biology teacher's skill set and learner's academic achievement in ONELGA. Good communication skills of teacher are needed for students' academic and professional success. Teacher communicates more instructions orally in classroom to students. Teacher that have poor communication skills cannot impart effectively what he knows and this may cause failure of students to learn. Morreale et al (2000) in Khan et al., (2017) affirmed that the BT with great communication skills are less likely to have class management challenges as they are able to keep the learners bound; listening or participating in the lesson. Teaching methods and instructional materials are important aspects of the Biology teacher's skill set that influences student's school performance. Almroth (2015) observed that the importance of learning biology with the aid of biological science laboratory apparatus are that it helps to understand the biological concepts, and in the process, students develop scientific reasoning skills and laboratory manipulative skills. The finding also revealed that biology apparatus aids students' interest in science as they yearn to investigate and explore more about their environment. Nappi (2018) corroborated that questions are among the most powerful teaching tools, and when teachers increase their repertoire of questioning techniques, the quality of instruction can be significantly improved.

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The findings as revealed in Table 3a shows that teachers' attitude to work significantly relates to students' Biology performance in ONELGA. The biology teacher's disposition towards his/her job influences productivity. The biology teacher with the right attitude to work is more likely to keep abreast with novel discoveries in the field. While, striving to gain mastery over subject matter, introducing variety with respect to use of teaching aids and methodology of curriculum implementation) in the classroom will motivate learners to attain higher academic feats. The Biology teacher with the wrong attitude to work demoralize and discourage learners. Duatepe and Oylum (2006) in Al-Harty (2013) proved that teachers' attitudes affect students' performance. Lockheed et al., (1991) in Nghambi (2014) indicated that lack of motivation and professional commitment causes students to reduce their attendance to class, which in turn affect the performance of students academically.

## Conclusion

The results of the study reveal that there is relationship between the biology teacher's personality and students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in ONELGA, Rivers State. Aspects of personality in the area of subject mastery, skill set, attitude to work and job satisfaction were scrutinized. In as much no man is an island, the biology teacher should also strive to be the most knowledgeable person in the classroom setting. Findings have shown that to effectively and efficiently transfer knowledge and skills to enable learners attain higher academically, the biology teacher should possess certain skills and know when and how to use them to achieve the required result. The study also indicated the biology teacher's attitude to work is a determinant of students school achievement, which indirectly related to the teacher's sense of satisfaction obtained from teaching biology. Thus, the BT who is knowledgeable who possesses the right skill set, combined with the right attitude to work is the ideal for motivating students to perform better, academically.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher makes the following recommendations.

1. Government and school heads should organize workshops, orientation seminars, and other related programs to equip teachers of biology with the relevant skills (such as communication style, questioning techniques, classroom management, use of instructional methods and teaching aids, etc).
2. They should motivate the teachers to keep the right attitude to work so as to enhance the role of the Biology teacher in motivating students to achieve better, academic wise.
3. The school, government and society at large should make deliberate attempt to recognize teachers of biology by giving awards or/and honourable offices to individuals who have earned it. The pay of teachers of biology should be reviewed upwards. As well as giving them incentives and loans, enjoyed by other professions in civil service.
4. The private owned education institutions should be carefully monitored to ensure that the biology teachers working with them are paid as they should.

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5. The biology teachers should be challenged to attain mastery in discipline as well as keep abreast with novel inventions and discovery in the field.

6. An external committee should be established by the Ministry of Education to monitor biology teachers in both the public and private sectors.

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