

## Assessment of contributions of demographic variables to the levels of possession of work skills among University senior non-teaching staff in Ogun State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*Work skills play a germane role in productivity of employees of any organisation. It entails technical, human and conceptual skills. This study assessed levels of possession of work skills among University Senior Non-teaching Staff (USNS) in Ogun State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was used. Three research questions guided the study. The population consists of all USNS who are on Consolidated Tertiary Salary Scale (CONTISS) 6 to 12 in Ogun State. Stratified random sampling and simple random sampling technique were used to select 3 Universities and 381 USNS respectively. A scale was used by the heads of Departments to rate the levels of possession of work skills of the selected USNS and it was used for data collection. It was validated and the reliability coefficient was 0.9. Descriptive statistics, ANOVA and Partial Least Square (PLS) were used to answer the research questions. The result showed that the USNS possess the required work skills. However, only<sup>x</sup>academic qualification contributes significantly to the possession of work skills and there was no significant difference in the possession of work skills, among University Senior Non-teaching Staff, along school ownership. Recommendations centred on encouragement of staff development policy.*

**Key words: Work skills, technical skills, human skills and conceptual skills**

### Introduction

Work skills became germane and a cherished concept in the workplace in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century due to change in the rules for work especially when personnel were assessed by a new yardstick that consists of smartness, training, expertise, self management, and managing colleagues in the workplace. They are also employability skills, general skills that cut across all jobs/professions. They are foundational academic, intrapersonal and interpersonal abilities. These skills transcend educational degrees, certifications and licenses in the workplace due to its importance. The ways of conceiving work skills construct reflects that these skills consist of components of both hard/technical skills and soft skills.

Finch and Madux (2006) defined work skills as special knowledge and abilities used to perform specified task. Most of these skills are latent in nature but observable in an individual because they are evident in individual's attitudes, habits and values. These skills are: efficiency, timeliness organisational skills, commitment, self-confidence, competency/proficiency, leadership

skills, communication skills, adaptability, flexibility, problem solving expression on paper/writing skills, team work, self management, record management, numerical ability, conscientiousness, punctuality, creativity, presentation skills, integrity, honesty, fidelity, respect, courteousness, networking, helping others, ability to learn from criticism, knowledge management, patience/perseverance, resilience, acuteness, alertness, proactive skill, proper appearance, analytical skills, persuasiveness, conflict resolution, assertiveness, versatility, resourcefulness, effectiveness, adroitness, innovation, time management, anger management, quality of work, information management, motivation, accuracy, responsiveness, work ethics, stress management and enthusiasm.

Katz (1955) and Brady (1983) categorized work skills into three: technical, conceptual and human skills. According to Brady (1983), technical skills are special abilities needed to perform a specific task or job (skills that accompany competencies), these are data analysis, writing clearly, planning/event planning, computer competencies, ability to

organise and prioritise task (time management) among others. Conceptual skills are ability to think creatively and work with ideas. It consists of analytical skills, critical thinking, comprehension, conscientiousness and safety to mention but a few. These skills were in demand simply to enable workers to get along with their fellow colleagues and supervisors in order to enable them perform, make sound and critical decisions.

The University Senior Non-teaching Staff (USNS) also referred to as Senior Non-Teaching (SNT) is one of the two categories of staff in the University. It is heterogeneous in nature due to different group of professionals that are in this category of staff in the University system. These staff are in different units: Registry, Bursary, Information Communication Technology (ICT) Centre, Academic Planning Unit, University Health Services, Library, Works and Services, Physical Planning Unit, Sports Centre, Public Relations Unit, Internal Audit and Science Laboratory/Technologists/Technical Unit (University of Agriculture, Abeokuta Career Structure, 2013).

The University Senior Non-teaching Staff perform supporting roles to the academic staff in the University system. In addition, they attend to members of the University community; the Academic staff, students and the 'town'. According to Nwosu, Olaore, Oyenuga and Oladipo (2014), the Non-teaching staff services are indispensable and critical to the survival, thriving of the Institution and achieving excellence as a team. The USNS are responsible for many activities in the University.

The administrative staffers are responsible for the smooth running of day-to-day administrative duties in the University, the physical planning staff are in charge of the infrastructural setup, the staff in Works and Services are responsible for maintenance of infrastructure and teaching materials, the Library and ICT staff maintain the online Library and internet services respectively. The Bursary and the Internal Audit Units see to the financial compliance of the students and disbursement of fund for both fixed and recurrent projects. The Counselors also provide guidance and support for the students among

others. In order to perform these duties, the USNS need these skills in form of input. These inputs were assessed to determine their performance. Nevertheless, there are some specific skills and job knowledge (administrative knowledge) that are common and relevant to the job, which they perform to enhance productivity.

One pertinent question at this juncture is: are the USNS competent and equipped with the necessary skills to perform these tasks effectively? Evers, Rush and Berdrow (2001), noted that the general employability skills required in the labour market in recent times do not appear to be well-developed by University graduates. Jimoh (2008) carried out a research on Situational judgment, emotional labour conscientiousness and demographic factors as predictors of job performance among University administrative workers in South-Western Nigeria. Jimoh found that job performance of the University professional Administrators was dwindling due to incompetence of the professional Administrators. It was further stated that in spite of the incompetence of these staff, they still enjoyed their promotion as at when due. According to Evers, Rush and Berdrow (2001), and Jimoh (2008) submissions, it can be inferred that some of these University graduates eventually get employed into the University system as non-teaching staff without the necessary skills to aid productivity. Iwintolu (2014) submitted that there was discrepancy between the School and the Industry due to the lethargic nature of the Nigerian University education curriculum.

A lot of research have been conducted on the positive and negative effects of the demographic factors: age of staff, staff years of experience, school ownership, staff academic qualification and years of existence (age) of institution on possession of work skills and job performance. According to Krampe and Charnes (2006), continuous practice is necessary in order to sustain a high level of performance. Krampe and Cherness noted that specific practice appears important for maintaining skills, or facilitating the development of compensatory mechanisms as an adaptation to age-related declines. Mainz (2000) argued that simple accumulation of

experience was not sufficient to attenuate the effects of age. Krampe and Ericsson (1996) measured the older amateur pianists with 40 years of experience in music and found that this in itself was not enough to prevent decline in both general and domain-specific skills. These findings were mirrored in medicine and accounting where performance of professionals has shown declines subsequent to the end of formal training, despite increasing years of experience in the field.

Years of experience ought to enrich experience of employees because it gives an older employee a superior understanding of how job is done efficiently such that it saves the establishment's money. Also, the pride of a job well done, is evident in the older employees. Researchers have discovered that younger employees do not concern themselves with job well done. Owolabi and Adedayo (2012) noted that experience of a teacher is significant at impacting the students' academic performance in Physics. Work experience provides many benefits, giving you skills and experience that will allow you stand out to potential employers as well as helping you choose the right sector to work in. To be more employable, higher academic qualification is a tremendous asset, but it is not the only way to stand out to potential employers. Work experience also helps employees to differentiate themselves, which is an important factor when competition for jobs is so fierce. Work experience is an important part with regards to getting employment opportunities. Work experience helps in building useful skills that cannot be taught in the classroom. Work experience empowers new talent and gives employee the edge to push for the most sought after graduate positions in diverse fields. Work experience equips an employee with certain soft skills such as team working, communication skills and commercial awareness, all of which are sought after by employers, especially at graduate level.

Besides, Sampson (2004) and Miller and Birch (2007) shared a view that private schools are more likely to have greater financial resources which aid provision of facilities. In their conclusion, they maintained that the type of school affects the academic performance of students. Miller and Birch (2007) hypothesize that student's school background is positively related to academic performance of undergraduate students. In the same vein, Crosne, Johnson and Elder (2004) found that school ownership (that is schools owned by

private individuals and those owned by the government) is an important structural component of the school. Crosne *et. al* (2004) found that additional funding of private schools leads to better academic performance and more access to resources such as computers.

Wachira (2016) carried out a research on effects of personal characteristics on performance of University Non-teaching staff and stated that staff who acquired additional qualifications on personal efforts were not rewarded accordingly and they lack advanced skills and competencies. The prestige associated with the age of a University coupled with Staff years of experience in the University makes most people consider it as a major factor that in forms the general insistence by most that the standard of learning is higher in older public institutions. This is also supposed to be applicable to the workforce in the institutions. On the contrary, researchers such as Jimoh (2008) proved this wrong. Jimoh found that staff in older Universities lack committed staff. Maha (2015) and Kuchava (2016) noted that older institutions refused to automate several core processes that can be easily managed using a system. However, recently as a result of global advancement in technology, these older Universities have started using computer for record keeping.

The aim of this study are to find out:

1. the extent to which the University Senior Non-teaching Staff (USNS) in Ogun State Nigeria possess different work skills.
2. the difference in possession of work skills among USNS in the public Universities (Universities owned by Federal, State government and private owned Universities).
3. the extent to which the demographic factors predict possession of work skills among the USNS.

### Research Questions

1. To what extent do University Senior Non-teaching Staff (USNS) possess work skills?
2. Is there any significant difference in possession of work skills, along school ownership, among University Senior Non-teaching staff?
3. What are the composite and relative contributions of the demographic

predictor variables (a) years of existence of University, (b) Age of staff, (c) Staff academic Qualification, (d) Staff years of experience and (e) School Ownership on University Senior Non-teaching Staff Work Skills?

**Methodology**

The study adopted descriptive research design of survey research type. The target population comprised all University Senior Non-teaching Staff (USNS) in both public and private Universities in Ogun State, Nigeria who are on CONTISS six (6) to twelve (12). Staffers on CONTISS thirteen (13) and above were excluded because many of them were Heads of Departments/Units that rated their subordinates. Stratified sampling technique was employed to select three (3) Universities from the State. The Universities were stratified by ownership. One University was randomly selected from each stratum (State and Private). Purposive sampling technique was used to select the only Federal

University in the State.

These Universities are:

- i) Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta
- ii) Tai Solarin University of Education
- iii) Crescent University

A total of three hundred and eighty-one (381) USNS were selected from the existing twelve (12) units in the Universities; Registry, Bursary, Information Communication Technology (ICT) Centre, Academic Planning Unit, University Health Services, Library, Works and Services, Sports Centre, Public Relations Unit, Internal Audit, Security and Technical and Technologists' Unit. The twelve (12) Heads of the Units were used to rate the selected staff in each University giving a total number of thirty-six (36) Heads of Units.

Simple random sampling was employed to select one hundred and eighty-two (182) from FUNAAB, one hundred and fifty-five (155) from TASUED and forty-four from Crescent University.

State	Institution	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	Total												
Ogun	Federal University	6	2	1	5	1	1	1	5	1	1	3	8	8	6	20	8	1	5	18	2					
	State University	5	7	1	2	8	1	2	9	2	8	6	4	20	6	1	1	15	5							
	Private University	1	0	3	2	4	3	2	4	2	2	6	3	3	4	4										
<b>Total</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>1</b>

**Keys**

- A = Registry
- B = Bursary
- C = Internal Audit
- D = Health Centre/Services
- E = Works and Services
- F = Academic Planning
- G = ICT
- H = Public Relations
- I = Sports
- J = Scientist/Technologists/Technical Unit
- K = Library
- L = Security

**Instrumentation**

One instrument was used to collect data for this study - University Senior Non-teaching Staff Work Skills Scale (USNSWSS)

The scale was designed to rate the USNS. The head of each of the 12 Units that constitute the University Senior Non-teaching Staff in each of the selected Universities rated their subordinates. The scale was divided into two sections. Section A includes general information about the selected staff and the institution while section B consists of 39 items to assess Work skills of the USNS. The Work skills of the selected sample were rated on the scale which was simplified under some items on a five point

scale described under 1 = Very Poor, 2 = Poor, 3 = Good, 4 = Very Good and 5 = Excellent. The keys for appraising and scoring the staff on each item are as follows:

- 5 = **Excellent:** Displays the work skills **consistently above acceptable levels;** Subordinate displays the skills at all times without exception
- 4 = **Very Good:** Displays the work skills **occasionally below acceptable levels;** Subordinate displays the skills at high level with few exceptions;
- 3 = **Good:** Displays the work skills to **merely meet acceptable levels;** Subordinate displays work skills to

	achieve desired expectation with errors, but such errors are corrected quickly	Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability and internal consistency of the scale which gave a reliability coefficient of 9.0. The heads of the Units in the Universities used the scale to assess their subordinates. Descriptive statistics, ANOVA and Partial Least Squares (PLS) were used to analyse the data collected.
2 =	<b>Poor:</b> Displays work skills occasionally below acceptable levels; Subordinate displays work skills but needs major improvement	
1 =	<b>Very Poor:</b> Displays work skills consistently below acceptable levels; Subordinate does not show work skills	

## Results

### Research Question 1: Do University Senior Non-teaching Staff possess work skills?

**Table 2: Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) and Standard deviation (S) rating of USNS' possession of work skills**

S/N	Item Statement	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Std. Deviation
<b>Officer being assessed</b>			
1.	is emotionally stable while working under pressure	3.85	.918
2.	defends organizational objectives	3.85	.862
3.	handles office tasks skillfully	3.88	.900
4.	is morally upright	3.97	.898
5.	has strong belief in what is right	3.91	.865
6.	Investigates issues appropriately	3.79	.864
7.	writes report clearly with little or no mistakes	3.72	.902
8.	is not disposed to cheating	4.02	.873
9.	is not disposed to stealing	3.95	.865
10.	tells the truth about an issue	3.98	.881
11.	follows up tasks to ensure appropriate delivery	3.81	.845
12.	is composed while facing any challenge	3.88	.897
13.	is always ready to get solution to every challenge he/she faces	3.86	.879
14.	takes appropriate action on problems as necessary	3.90	.805
15.	deals appropriately with sensitive matters	3.95	.840
16.	is not easily discouraged	3.86	.866
17.	tries his/her best to come through without delay	3.87	.822
18.	freely contributes his/her idea when there is need	3.90	.864
19.	controls himself/herself in terms of stress	3.83	.848
20.	has inclination to provide services with humility	3.87	.923
21.	handles documents appropriately	3.94	.929
22.	is firm in decision making	3.85	.852
23.	thinks about cases in an intelligent way	3.82	.831
24.	performs tasks sequentially	3.93	.864
25.	develops a feedback mechanism for self evaluation	3.80	.880
26.	lends himself/herself to corrections	3.88	.833
27.	possesses good representation of the institution in the public	3.86	.849
28.	accepts teachings that helps him/her to grow professionally	3.90	.875
29.	accepts positive changes	3.83	.886
30.	gives new idea of performing certain task	3.86	.874
31.	re-arranges office for a better and conducive environment	3.76	.818
32.	speedily recovers from set back	3.89	.815
33.	is confident	3.88	.829
34.	organises his/her time	3.93	.885
35.	uses his/her time constructively	3.93	.867
36.	receives compliment graciously	3.90	.802
37.	handles crisis tactically to get result	3.90	.846
38.	sticks to his/her plan	3.86	.896
39.	possesses different skills thereby useful in diverse ways	3.90	.903

\*Group mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) = 3.87, Group SD = 0.885

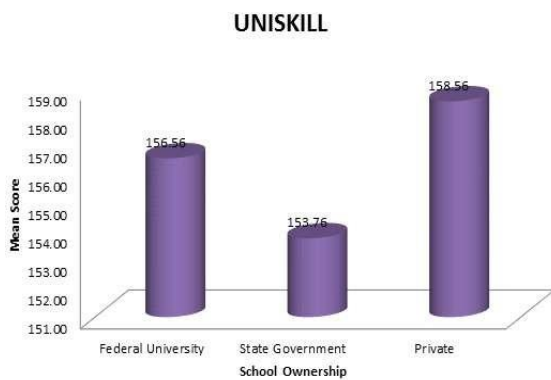
Table 2 depicts the mean, group mean and the standard deviation of the extent to which the USNS possess work skills. The group mean value (3.87) is above 2.50 which is the agreed limit value.

**Research Question 2:** Is there any significant difference in the possession of work skills, among University Senior Non-teaching Staff, along school ownership?

**Table 3: Summary of Descriptive analysis of mean pattern of the level of possession of work skills of USNS along School ownership**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					Federal University	182		
State Government	155	153.76	17.237	1.385	151.03	156.50	97	185
Private	43	158.56	18.787	2.865	152.78	164.34	117	188
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>155.64</b>	<b>18.399</b>	<b>.944</b>	<b>153.79</b>	<b>157.50</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>188</b>

Mean\* = The transformed mean value to percentage for purpose of comparison



**Fig. 1.1:** Bar chart showing mean pattern of levels of possession of work skills among USNS along School Ownership

**Table 4: Summary of the analysis of ANOVA on differences in the possession of work skills among the USNS along school ownership**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1067.432	2	533.716	1.582	.207
Within Groups	127227.608	377	337.474		
Total	128295.039	379			

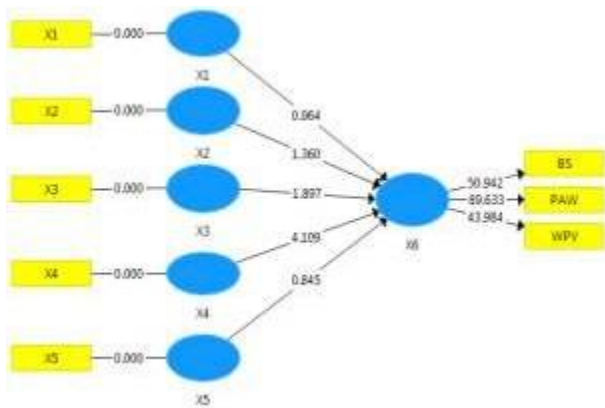
Table 3 shows the summary of analysis of mean pattern of possession of work skills among USNS along School ownership at the three

different categories, which are, Federal State and Private. The table shows a total mean of 155.64

The table reveals the mean of each category ( $\bar{X}$ = 156.56), Federal ( $\bar{X}$ = 153.76), State and ( $\bar{X}$ = 158.56) Private. It shows that USNS in the Private University has the highest mean of 158.56 and the USNS in the State University has the lowest mean of 153.76

Figure 1.1 shows the Mean score of possession of work skills among the USNS in Federal, State and Private Universities 156.56, 153.76 and 158.56 respectively. This shows that USNS in the Private Universities possess the required work skills to be effective in the University system more than the USNS in the Federal and State Universities. However, the difference in possession of work skills along School Ownership is not significant at 0.207.

**Research Question 3:** What are the relative contributions of the predictor (demographic) variables; years of existence of University, Age of staff, Staff academic Qualification, Staff years of experience and School Ownership on University Senior Non-teaching Staff Work Skills?



**Figure 1.2 Structural Model with T values of the Demographic Variables and the Subscales of USNSWSS.**

The path coefficients were later subjected to test of significance at 0.05 level of significance with two tails to determine the relative contribution of the demographic variables to work skill. The result of the analysis as displayed in Figure 4.3 revealed that only the path X4 -> X6 is significant on work skills, hence it is the only variable that has relative contribution to work skills. Table 4.14 presents the summary of the analysis. This result depicts that X4 has more influence on work skills with 0.247.

**Table 5: Summary of the t Values and p Values of the demographic variables to the prediction of University Senior Non-teaching Staff Work Skills**

	Path coefficient	Bootstrapped sample	t value	p Values
X1 -> X6	0.043	0.042	0.964	0.335
X2 -> X6	0.082	0.087	1.36	0.175
X3 -> X6	-0.105	-0.104	1.897	0.058
X4 -> X6	0.247	0.243	4.109	000.0
X5 -> X6	0.065	0.061	0.845	0.399

Based on the X6 variance, the 5 components model explains almost 80% of the variance in the predictors it shows that the model has adequate predictive ability. Each of the predictor variables has t and p values of 0.964; 0.335, 1.36; 0.175, 1.897; 0.058, 4.109; 000.0 and 0.845; 0.399 respectively. The table also reveals that only one predictor variable, staff highest academic qualification with t (4.109; 000.0) p < 0.05 predicts the possession of work skills

among the USNS. School ownership with t and p values 0.964; 0.335, age of University 1.36; 0.175, Staff age 1.897; 0.058 and staff years of experience 0.845; 0.399 contribute insignificantly to prediction of work skills among the University Non-teaching Staff.

**Discussion**

The findings of this study on possession of work skills along school ownership depicts that USNS possess the necessary work skills. However, the USNS in Private Schools possess the necessary work skills than staffers in the Public Schools which are owned by the Government (Federal and State). However, the difference is not significant. This finding did not corroborate the submission of Jimoh (2008) that the University Administrators are not effective. The null hypothesis was not rejected because there is no significant difference in the possession of work skills among the USNS, along school ownership. The mean margin was close and this could have been so because the Private institutions are goal oriented and take staff monitoring at the workplace as a priority. Due to this, Private Universities' staffers always show keen interest and put in their best in the tasks assigned to them. Also, this study revealed that the USNS possess the necessary work skills. This finding disagrees with Wachira (2016), who observed that non-teaching staff development in campuses faced challenges that are related to skill development that made them lack the necessary skills.

Therefore, it can be concluded that there was no significant difference in possession of work skills along school ownership among USNS. This finding may be unexpected because, staff in the Federal and State Universities were expected to possess work skills at a level that is higher than the staff in the private Universities due to years of existence of most of the Federal and State Universities. Besides, they have produced experienced staff who ought to have positively influenced the experience of the Senior Non-teaching Staff who are on grade level 6 to 12. This finding is in tandem with the findings of Arowojolu (2005) that parents patronised private primary schools due to effectiveness and efficiency of staff, constant and proper supervision or monitoring of staff performance

while parents noted the nonchalant attitude of staff, industrial strike actions, lack of facilities in the public schools.

From the above result, staff highest academic qualification contributes significantly in the prediction of University Senior Non-teaching Staff Work Skills. This contradicts the finding of Jimoh (2008) that academic qualification has no significant impact on the level of job performance among University administrators. Nevertheless, this finding corroborates Akorede and Olaniran (2012) assertion that teachers acquire higher qualifications because they always look for greener pasture as it has positive relationship with job performance. This study is also in support of Ashton *et al.* (2007), that qualification is one of the skills that is important in Britain. The finding of this study in respect of academic qualification is also in support of the work of Owolabi (2005) cited in Jimoh (2008). This finding corroborates the finding of Verhaest and Omev (2009) and Owolabi and Adedayo (2012) which affirmed that qualification contributes to performance of employees. In similar vein, this finding supports the finding of Abdulrahmon, Adeleye and Tanimola (2018) who found that job performance of Bursary staff with professional qualification was higher than non-certified staff and Bursary staffers with higher tertiary education acquires better skills and performed better in accounting task than those with lower qualification.

From the table, other variables X1, X2, X3, and X5 may not have contributed to the prediction of possession of work skills among USNS due to globalisation and technology which had made education simple such that people can read and learn some of these skills. Again, the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills had become one of the important criteria used in recruiting employees. All these can be sourced for with the help of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

### Conclusion

This paper had attempted to explain what work skills are, the level of possession of work skills and the demographic factors that contribute to the possession of work skills among the University Senior Non-teaching Staff in Ogun

State. Education is an instrument that people can use to acquire and master some skills and techniques required to actively participate in the new global economy and to aid the employability of young ones. It is, therefore, very necessary that any developmental effort in Nigeria must recognize the need to widen the Human Resource (HR) base.

### Recommendations

Also, since staff highest academic qualification significantly affects possession of necessary work skills, implementation of the staff development policy by the policy makers and the University Management should be revisited and strictly monitored. The University Senior Non-teaching Staff should be encouraged and supported financially to acquire higher degrees. The University Senior Non-teaching should also embrace this policy by showing positive attitude to additional qualification.

Therefore, Work Skills should be embedded in the school curriculum and students should be assessed like all other subjects at all levels of education by the Government.

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