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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S NOTES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

As I present to you the 9th edition of the Journal of Early Childhood and Primary Education (JECPE) of Kwara State University (KWASU), Malete, I am delighted to let you know that JECPE attempts to provide a forum where academics, students, practitioners and researchers can share and publish scholarly articles that are relevant to the promotion of data driven innovation in early childhood teacher preparation in the 21st century around the world and particularly in sub-saharan African. Articles published in this journal are gotten from the 4th biennial International Conference on Childhood Education (ICCE 2020) held in Kwara State University, Malete from Tuesday 3rd –Friday 6th march 2020 with the following sub-themes: Teacher preparation in ECE, Teacher preparation and early childhood education curriculum, Teacher preparation and pedagogical knowledge, Teacher preparation and content knowledge, Teacher preparation and sustainable development goals, Teacher preparation and assessment, Teacher preparation and national development. The keynote speaker is an emeritus professor, Prof. PAI Obanya from the Institute of Education, University of Ibadan. The lead paper presenter is Prof Folashade R. Sulaiman from the department of Childhood Education, Tai Solarin University of Education.

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TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL COMPETENCIES AND PUPILS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN LAGOS, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Competent teachers are vital in improving pupils' academic performance and closing the achievement gaps. The descriptive survey research design examines teachers' pedagogical competencies and pupils' academic performance in selected lower primary schools in Lagos, Nigeria. Sixteen schools from Shomolu and Mushin Local Government Areas were randomly selected for the study using random sampling technique. Ten (10) teachers in primary one and two were randomly selected from each of the schools making a total of one hundred and sixty (160) teachers. A twenty-two item (22) item statements questionnaire which emanated from two research questions were used to gather data using a four-point Rating scale and data were analysed using descriptive statistics. From the results, it was found out that competent teachers explicitly outline the instructional objectives, do a recap of the previous lesson at the beginning of new lesson, and adopt varied techniques to ensure pupils understand the subject matter during instruction. Also, pupils develop self-confidence as teachers adopt varied techniques and materials during instruction, and use of varied strategies

and materials that align with 21st century trends and enhance hands-on-activities like use of computers, projectors, iPods among others boost teachers' pedagogical competence. It was therefore recommended among others that Government and private sectors should sponsor teachers for in-service training. Schools should train teachers on use of 21st century technological gadgets during instruction. Also, alternative sources of power supply should be put in place by schools, NGOs, and Government to encourage utilisation of technological gadgets during instruction.

Keywords: Pedagogy, Competencies, Teachers, Pupils, Academic Performance

Introduction

Teachers pedal the wheels of knowledge among pupils. They are the source of motivation to learning and as a result are pivotal for academic excellence. The competencies and preparedness of teachers go to a large extent in determining the skills those teachers exhibit. However, most teachers lack the charisma to enhance active participatory learning. Child-centred method of teaching involves active participation of learners during instruction. In such a class, the teacher is a facilitator and there are good visual aids in current use as well as mapping out in the class interesting learning areas (Maduabum, 2017). In order to meet up with quality teaching and effective learning outcome, regular professional face-lift is paramount. Those who cannot meet up with these challenges often see themselves leaving the profession very early. In affirmation, Hobson, Ashby, Malderez and Tomlinson (2009) rightly state that teachers who are not readily prepared for these challenges are not likely to stay long in the profession.

In the same vein, Federal Republic of Nigeria in her National Policy on Education (NPE) (2013) states that all teachers in the educational system shall be professionally trained; teacher education shall continue to take cognizance of changes in methodology and in the curriculum as well as being exposed to innovations in the profession. Also, NPE (2013) asserts that teacher education shall be oriented towards play-way method. In this vein, play should be a teaching strategy teachers should adopt. Having good trained teachers paves way for academic excellence. Therefore, Stavreva (2013) postulates that without teachers, teaching and learning cannot be effectual.

Teachers with good pedagogical competence are a sinequanon to attaining academic height by pupils. In support, Wamala and Seruwagi (2013) posit that teachers cannot be effective without having some qualities. Akpan (2002) asserts

that pedagogical competency is the art of teaching the subject and observing principles such as: teaching from known to unknown, from abstract to concrete and from simple to complex among others. Teachers are contributory factors to academic excellence of pupils. Lack of such skills would result in poor performance of pupils. In support, Akyeampong, Pryor and Ampiah (2006) assert that effectual pupils' learning and academic performance is hampered by weaknesses in teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and classroom practices. To buttress this further, teachers' instructional style during instructions has a lot of effects on learning. In affirmation, Chang (2010) posits that inappropriate instructional strategies impede knowledge retention and purpose. Therefore, Darling-Hammond, (2006); & Noddings (2007) postulate that teacher competencies entails subject matter, understanding of teaching techniques and learning styles as well as the process of applying effective teaching approaches to improve the process of knowledge acquisition and application resulting in the transformation of learners into new knowledgeable individuals.

Every teacher has characteristics based on knowledge acquisition, experience and possibly qualification and training received over time. In affirmation, Muhammed, Yasmen, Robina and Arabia (2016) are of the opinion that teaching and pedagogical skills require different levels of competence. The researchers reiterate that a teacher inculcates information and knowledge in the mind of a learner and so must be equipped with the pedagogical skills and techniques. Chika (2012) opines that learning styles bring up to date teachers' pedagogical competencies and their skill to promote improved academic performance. Also, Sultan and Shafi (2014) assert that competencies are particular and self apparent traits that teachers should possess.

Teachers' mode of transmitting knowledge to pupils propels their motivation to learn. Early Childhood National Centres (2017) postulates that competencies are measurable model of understanding, proficiencies, abilities, behaviours, and other attributes that an individual needs to perform work roles or job-related functions productively. The Wing Institute Oakland (2019) defines competencies as the skills and knowledge that enable a teacher to be thriving. The researcher further grouped the competencies into four: Classroom management, Instructional delivery, Formative assessment, and Personal competencies (soft skills). Curtin (2005) categorizes teachers' pedagogical competencies into the following: teaching methods, utilization of instructional media, learner evaluation and preparation and utilization of instructional tools. In addition, Selvi (2010) affirms that the common understanding related to teachers' competencies is divided into three main areas: field competencies, pedagogical competencies, and cultural competencies. The researcher outlines kinds of

competencies teachers need such as: field competencies, research competencies, curriculum competencies, lifelong learning competencies, social-cultural competencies, emotional competencies, communication competencies, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) competencies and environmental competencies. In support, Ilanlou and Zand (2011) maintain that teachers need to be good class managers by having definite skills of conversing with pupils in their classes, skills to explore and acquire knowledge and appraise their academic achievement of pupils in class. In addition, Chika (2012) postulates that learner-centred approach should be adopted as a strategy for improving pupils' academic performance in examinations and use of knowledge and skills required. Competencies are used to inform very important area of focus for professional development (National Professional Development Centre on Inclusion, 2011). In this vein, Act No 7 of 1978 authorized National Teacher Institute since its establishment to organize programmes for upgrading and updating practicing teachers at all level (Fareo, 2013). Also, Sarach (2018) posits that professional development programmes are needed to address the dynamic change in the educational policies. Therefore, Wamala and Seruwagi (2013) postulate that competent teachers are needed for curriculum implementation to be successful.

One of the roles of teachers is to ensure that pupils excel in their academic endeavours. In affirmation, Maina (2010) is of the view that the main objective of teachers should only be to enhance the academic performance of pupils and lead them to their effective development. Competent teachers utilize varied instructional materials for academic excellence of pupils. This is because no one particular instructional material is the best due to varied learners in class. Unfortunately, most teachers are abreast with traditional instructional materials rather than modern instructional materials. In affirmation, Lewin and Stuart (2003) point out that most teachers rely in the past on the traditional text books and teachers' guide. Besides, Likoko, Mutsitso and Nasongo (2013) assert that instructional materials include resources such as text books, charts, and maps, visual and electronic materials. Atkinson (2003) adds that stationery such as paper supplies, exercise books, pencils, rules among others are requisite materials required for teaching and learning. Instructional materials are concrete or physical objects which provide sound, visual or both to the sense organs during instruction (Agina-Obu, 2005). Esu (2004) postulates that instructional materials are resources within the reach of the teacher and the learners that facilitate teaching and learning and those materials may be both human and non-human provided they facilitate the attainment and appraisal of knowledge, proficiency, attitudes, morals and values. Ikerionwu (2000) refers to

instructional materials as objects or devices, which assist the teacher to construct a lesson to the learner. Ogwo and Oranu (2006) classify instructional materials into audio materials, visual materials and audio-visual materials. An audio-visual instructional material is a combination of devices that appeal to the senses of both hearing, seeing and children's participation such as television, motion picture, iPods, and computers among others. In agreement, Ashikuzzaman (2015) classifies audio visual aids into: **Auditory aids which are** instructional device that can be heard but not seen such as tape record, microphones, ear phones among others and **Visual aids as any** instructional device that can be seen, but not heard like slide, film strips among others.

Teachers through asking questions during instruction make a judgement on how far they have imparted knowledge through the pupils' responses to questions. In agreement, questioning helps pupils develop their ability to think and solve problems, develop self-confidence, be self-assertive, increases classroom interaction among pupils and teachers, allow the pupils to actively participate in the lesson and encourage pupils to ask their own question which helps the teacher to discover how successfully he has taught the pupils (Madubum, 2017). Achuonye and Ajoku, (2003) state that questioning method helps bring out a timid learner out from the shell, by giving him/her an opportunity to express his or her thoughts. Pooja, (2017) states that question and answer requires reflection as information is exchanged in response to a question and the teacher does this in a learner-interactive method. Black, Harrison, Lee and Marshad, (2002) assert that questioning allows pupils to display an understanding of a topic, link up with other ideas and be aware of what they know or not which helps in their appraisal. Questioning relieves boredom among learners and allow them engage in academic challenges in order to understand the subject matter better (Rop, 2003). Method of evaluation of pupils is a characteristic of teachers' competency. In support, Lauchande, Passos and Howie (2017) assert that evaluation of pupils is an attribute of the school system. To Djamara (2006) the excess of evaluation is to inform the teacher on ways to improve on pupils' academic performance.

Therefore, the study identifies effects of teachers' pedagogical competencies and pupils' academic performance in selected lower primary schools in Lagos, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

Teachers' role in imparting knowledge to pupils is tantamount to their academic performance and success in life. However, most teachers prefer teacher-centred approach to learner-centred approach which is more participatory and encourages hands-on activities. Besides, most teachers also rely solely on their

initial certification and hardly involve themselves on routine professional training (seminars and workshops) to enhance their instructional strategies and skills. Also, due to teachers' resistance to change, some teachers rely solely on traditional text books, and teachers' guide. They hardly go extra mile in improvising instructional materials and bringing in innovations that are in accordance with technological trends of 21st century. Moreover, most teachers lack good use of instructional materials that propel pupils' motivation and readiness to learn. Further, most teachers do not consider learners' assimilation differences in class and rarely adopt varied instructional styles and materials. They stuck to traditional styles. Where teaching and learning processes are not enhanced and teachers rarely adopt strategies to bridging the achievement gaps among pupils; learning outcome is truncated.

It is therefore on the aforementioned premise that this work was anchored.

Research questions: The following research questions were answered in this study:

1. To what extent do teachers' pedagogical competencies improve pupils' academic performance?
2. In what ways do teachers' varied instructional styles and materials promote pupils' academic performance?

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design with one hundred and sixty (160) teachers from selected Lower Basic Primary Schools in Shomolu and Mushin Local Government Areas of Lagos State using random sampling technique. Sixteen (16) Lower public Primary Schools were selected in both LGAs; eight (8) schools from each of the LGAs. Ten (10) teachers were randomly selected from each of the sixteen (16) primary schools. Primary 1 and 2 teachers were randomly selected. Five (5) teachers were randomly selected from each stream. The instrument used to elicit responses was a twenty-two (22) item statements questionnaire which emanated from two research questions using a four-point Rating scale. Data were analysed using percentages, mean and standard deviation.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do teachers' pedagogical competencies improve pupils' academic performance?

Identifying the extent teachers' pedagogical competencies improve pupils' academic performance							
S/N	ITEM S	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Std.D
1.	Competent teachers explicitly outline the instructional objectives	80 (50%)	56 (35%)	11(6.9 %)	13(8.1 %)	3.26	0.34
2.	Competent teachers consult different reference materials for their lesson	87(54.4 %)	51(31.9 %)	8 (5%)	14(8.7 %)	3.31	0.37
3.	Competent teachers do a recap of the previous lesson at the beginning of new lesson	89(55.6 %)	55(34.4 %)	4(2.5%)	12(7.5 %)	3.38	0.39
4.	Teachers that are competent break down concepts to pupils' level of understanding	76(47.5 %)	63(39.3 %)	6(3.8%)	15(9.4 %)	3.25	0.35
5.	Competent teachers attend to pupils' needs individually	55(34.4 %)	78(48.7 %)	10(6.3 %)	17(10.6%)	3.06	0.33
6.	Competent teachers adopt varied techniques to ensure pupils understand the subject matter during instruction	81(50.6 %)	61(38.1 %)	8(5%)	10(6.3 %)	3.33	0.37
7.	Competent teachers adopt critical thinking with pupils while teaching	67(41.9 %)	78(48.7 %)	9(5.6%)	6(3.8 %)	3.28	0.39
8.	Competent teachers give room for questions during instruction	67(41.9 %)	73(45.6 %)	18(11.3 %)	2(1.2 %)	3.28	0.36
9.	Competent teachers adopt a child-centred hands on activities learning approach	78(48.8 %)	71(44.4 %)	8(5%)	3(1.8 %)	3.4	0.40
10.	Competent teachers stimulate learning through varied instructional media	70(43.8 %)	76(47.5 %)	9(5.6%)	5(3.1 %)	3.31	0.38
11.	Competent teachers keep records of pupils' academic progress as reference point	64(40%)	77(48.1 %)	11(6.9 %)	8(5%)	3.23	0.36

Results

Data gathered from **table 1**, items 1-11 have a high percentage mean agreement as follows: **Item 1** has a mean score of 3.26 and an SD of 0.34, **item 2** has a mean score of 3.31 and an SD of 0.37 while **item 3** has a mean score of 3.38 and an SD of 0.39. **Item 4** has a mean score of 3.25 and an SD of 0.35, **item 5** has a mean score of 3.06 and an SD of 0.33 while **item 6** has a mean score of 3.33 and an SD of 0.37. **Item 7** has a mean score of 3.28 and an SD of 0.39 while **item 8** has a

mean score of 3.28 and an SD of 0.36. **Item 9** has a mean score of 3.4 and an SD of 0.40 while **item 10** has a mean score of 3.31 and an SD of 0.38. Also, **Item 11** has a mean score of 3.23 and an SD of 0.36.

Discussions of findings

Results gathered from the respondents on **items 1-11** which identifies the extent teachers' pedagogical competencies improve pupils' academic performance has a high percentage agreement among others that competent teachers explicitly outline the instructional objectives, do a recap of the previous lesson at the beginning of new lesson, adopt varied techniques to ensure pupils understand the subject matter during instruction, give room for questions during instruction, and keep records of pupils' academic progress as reference point. In agreement, Srinivas and Venkalkrishina (2016) assert that to improve the academic performance of pupils, teachers should repeat concepts, provide them class and home work assignments, so that they can acquire complete understanding of the concepts.

Research question 2: In what ways do competent teachers' varied instructional styles and materials promote pupils' academic performance?

Table 2:

Identifying the effectiveness of teachers' varied instructional styles and materials that promote pupils' academic performance							
S/N	ITEM S	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Std.D
1.	Pupils develop self-confidence as teachers adopt varied learning techniques and materials during instruction	60(37.5%)	70(43.8%)	19(11.9%)	11(6.8%)	3.11	0.31
2.	Varied strategies and materials that align with 21 st century trends and enhance hands-on- activities like use of computers, projectors, iPods among others boost teachers' pedagogical competence	66(41.3%)	78(48.7%)	12(7.5%)	4(2.5%)	3.28	0.37
3.	Teachers' adoption of varied instructional strategies and materials stimulate pupils' interest	72(45%)	68(42.5%)	12(7.5%)	8(5%)	3.27	0.35
4.	Teachers draw facts from pupils through different instructional strategies and materials	62(38.8%)	75(46.9%)	17(10.6%)	6(3.7%)	3.20	0.34

5.	Abstract concepts are brought to real life as teachers adopt varied techniques and materials	65(40.6 %)	78(48.8 %)	13(8.1 %)	4(2.5 %)	3.27	0.37
6.	Teachers' instructional strategies and materials increase manipulative and communication skills among pupils	61(38.1 %)	76(47.5 %)	15(9.4 %)	8(5%)	3.18	0.34
7.	Teachers' instructional strategies and materials propel and satisfy pupils curiosity to learn during instruction	70(43.8 %)	68(42.5 %)	18(11.2 %)	4(2.5 %)	3.27	0.35
8.	Pupils' critical thinking is developed through teachers' varied instructional strategies and materials	58(36.3 %)	71(44.4 %)	17(10.6 %)	14(8.7 %)	3.08	0.31
9.	Teachers' instructional strategies and materials help pupils to learn with much interest and understanding	63(39.4 %)	79(49.4 %)	16(10%)	2(1.2 %)	3.26	0.37
10.	Varied instructional techniques and materials help gain pupils' attention while learning is going on	69(43.1 %)	77(48.1 %)	11(6.9 %)	3(1.9 %)	3.32	0.38
11.	Teachers' instructional techniques and materials help motivate pupils to learn practical topics faster	71(44.4 %)	78(48.8 %)	9(5.6%)	2(1.2 %)	3.36	0.40

Results

Data gathered from **table 2, items 12-22** have a high mean percentage responses as follows: **item 12** has a mean score of 3.11 and an SD of 0.31, **item 13** has a mean score of 3.28 and an SD of 0.37. **item 14** has a mean score of 3.27 and an SD of 0.35, **item 15** has a mean score of 3.20 and an SD of 0.34 while **item 16** has a mean score of 3.27 and an SD of 0.37. **Item 17** has a mean score of 3.18 and an SD of 0.34, **item 18** has a mean score of 3.27 and an SD of 0.35, while **item 19** has a mean score of 3.08 and an SD of 0.31, **item 20** has a mean score of 3.26 and an SD of 0.37 while **item 21** has a mean score of 3.32 and an SD of 0.38. **Item 22** has a mean score of 3.36 and an SD of 0.40.

Discussion of Findings

Results gathered from the respondents on **items 12-22** which identifies the effectiveness of teachers' varied instructional styles and materials that promote pupils' academic performance shows among others that pupils develop self-confidence as teachers adopt varied techniques and materials during instruction, varied instructional strategies and materials stimulate pupils' interest, abstract concepts are brought to real life as teachers adopt varied techniques and

materials, use of varied strategies and materials that align with 21st century trends and enhance hands-on-activities like use of computers, projectors, iPods among others boost teachers' pedagogical competence, instructional strategies and materials propel and satisfy pupils curiosity to learn during instruction and help get pupils' attention while learning is going on. In agreement, Maina (2010) opines that pupils with positive attitude are ready for learning and have the desired academic outcomes.

Conclusion

Teachers have great role to play in imparting knowledge. They are the wheels by which knowledge is pedaled to pupils. Their pedagogical competence and styles of instruction, and materials that align with technological trends of 21st century speak a lot on the academic performance of pupils. To achieve such heights, teachers' continuous professional face-lift will equip them and enhance their pedagogical competence while the academic outcome of pupils will be enhanced to a great deal.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research work the following recommendations are worthwhile:

1. Government and private sectors should sponsor teachers for in-service training on pedagogical competence.
2. Schools should train teachers on use of 21st century technological gadgets during instruction like computers, projectors, Smart phones, I-pods among others.
3. To overcome challenges of skeletal power supply in schools, alternative sources of power supply should be put in place by schools, NGOs and Government to encourage utilisation of technological gadgets during instruction.
4. In house regular seminars and workshops should be organised regularly by schools to enhance teachers' competencies

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