

EFFECTS OF CHILD-CENTRED INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES ON PUPILS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED LOWER BASIC SCHOOLS IN SHOMOLU LGA OF LAGOS, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Teachers are key elements in effective teaching and learning. The study identified effects of child-centered instructional strategies on academic performance of pupils in selected Lower Basic schools in Shomolu LGA of Lagos, Nigeria. This study adopted a descriptive survey research. A sample size of 120 teachers was used. 12 schools were randomly selected; ten teachers from each school. Early childhood teachers in Basic 1-3 were randomly selected for the study. Two research questions in 17 item questionnaires titled 'Effects of Child-Centered Instructional Strategies' (ECCIS) was used to elicit information and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages and mean. The result showed that child-centered strategies such as demonstration, role-playing, and questioning strategies have a significant role on academic performance of pupils in primary schools. It was deduced also that learner-centered strategies encourage active participation of learners. Recommendations were made that schools should monitor the teaching strategies teachers use for learners to ensure they are developmentally age-appropriate, participatory, answer the learning objectives, and suit the learners' styles as well.

Keywords: Effects, Child-Centered Instructional Strategies, Teachers, Pupils, Academic Performance.

1.1: Introduction: 21st century pedagogy during instruction. In this type of promotes learners' active participation instruction, teachers are no longer the sages

on the stage; but guides on the side. They are no longer the omniscient repertoire of knowledge but they act as facilitators making learners contribute actively during instruction. Such pedagogy encourages learners to be at the fore-front during instruction instead of silent recipients of knowledge. However, most teachers still adopt teacher-centered instructional strategies making learners passive recipients of knowledge. Maduabum (2017) posits that child-centered method of teaching involves that the teacher is the facilitator of learning and the learners are actively involved 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.

Teachers' instructional strategies in class do not only determine the learning outcome but promote pupils' active participation during instruction. Teachers are the sole facilitators during instruction and as a result, the styles they adopt during instruction have great impact on learning outcomes. In credence, Pooja (2017) posits that learner-centered method enhances active learning, promotes interest,

analytical research, critical thinking and is effective because it does not centralize the flow of knowledge from the teacher to the pupils but improves pupils' achievement. However, there still exists a gap in teachers' instructional styles. Most teachers encourage rote memorization and teacher-centered approach making learners less-involved during instruction. Also, such teachers do not adopt age-appropriate effective strategies that are learner-centered, practical and activity-based among others to facilitate learning outcome in primary schools.

Quality is highly paramount in the education of the child. Correspondingly, Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) on National Policy on Education, (2013) on methods of teaching in primary schools' postulates that teaching shall be participatory, exploratory, experimental, child-centered, practical, activity-based, experiential and IT supported among others while educational activities shall be learner-centered for maximum self-development and self-fulfillment.

Learning will be ineffective in classrooms without a teacher. Therefore, Ihebereme (2010) defines the teacher as a person that

translates educational objectives into teaching and learning process. Likewise, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2001) see a teacher as a reflective practitioner who acquires new knowledge and experience based on the prior knowledge. Krejster (2004) acknowledges that teachers are consultants, mentors, aspirators, guides and moderators. Teaching is a method of impacting knowledge in order to help the learner have a change of attitude and acquire skills through designed activities (Buseri & Dorgu, 2011).

Teaching strategies adopted by teachers are pivotal during instruction. Styles adopted rely on certain factors. Pooja, (2017) defines teaching strategies as the type of principles and methods used for instruction. Also, teaching strategies are ways the teacher delivers the subject matter to the learners based on instructional objectives (Dorgu, 2015). Blazer, (2016) posits that inquiry-oriented instruction positively predicts learner's achievement. Awotu-Efebo (2011) outlines components of effective teaching as: preparation, implementation and evaluation. On preparation, the teacher selects objectives, content, instructional materials among

others. On implementation, the teacher adopts varied instructional strategies, individual materials and manages the learners and on evaluation, the teacher administers quizzes, tests and makes decision. Vikoo (2003) classifies teaching methods into cognitive, affective and psychomotor development methods. Questioning falls under cognitive development method where intellectual skills of a learner are developed; role playing method falls under affective development method which describes changes, interest, attitudes, values and the development of admiration and adequate change while demonstration method falls under psychomotor development method which are activity based method of teaching aimed at motor skills development, where learners are able to illustrate and perform certain skills using their manual agility.

Teachers adopt varying teaching styles considering certain factors. Correspondingly, Learn Ovation (2009) aligns to the above assertion by saying that teachers should use instructional strategies that support personalized learning strategies, collaborative learning and formal learning. Epstein (2007) postulates

that different strategies should be used to improve pupils' academic achievement. This buttresses the fact that teachers should use charts, pictures, project method and real objects, and storytelling, problem solving, question and discussion methods to help the audio learners and play method, field trips, role-playing should be used to increase the knowledge of visual learners and enhance learning outcomes in kinesthetic learners. They adopt varied instructional styles in diverse ways. Dorgu, (2015) opines that there are factors that the teacher should consider in selecting teaching methods; among them are: subject matter, instructional objectives, the learner, time, instructional materials, and environment. On the needs of the learner, the researcher adds that, age, ability, physical, emotional and aesthetic reaction among others should be put in mind. Pooja, (2017) opines that the teacher should consider pupils' background, knowledge, environment and learning goals in choosing instructional strategy. Awotua-Efebo, (2001) asserts that teaching is an interaction between a teacher and the learner to bring about a change in the learner's behavior. Saavedra and Opfer (2012) affirm that

lecture teaching strategy is still used as a dominant instructional approach in education sectors across the world. Contrastively, Ayodeji (2009) maintains that adoption of poor instructional strategies, predominant use of textbook and lecture teaching strategy used by teachers does not stimulate pupils' interest and academic performance.

As teaching is going on, in order for learners to assume roles seen in the lesson, teacher adopts role play strategy to make learning more effective. Therefore, Puyate and Emeh (2017) define role playing as the practice where learners take specific roles, they act for the purpose of learning a complex or vague concept. Puyate and Emeh (2017) state that role playing is effective in attaining the three learning domains; affective, cognitive and behavioral. In affirmation, Puyate and Emeh, (2017) opine that where learners assume role, they practice compassion and perspective taking. Umoren (2004) asserts that role playing assists pupils to have proper understanding, acquire value through demonstration of the concepts and attitudes in the content. Role playing encourages two-way feedback between

teachers and pupils through experiential learning and active dialogue where both parties ask relevant questions (Coffield, 2008). Role playing is the act of imitating a character and behavior of another person which helps pupils to develop their verbal communication and explore and strengthen the pupils' abilities (Maduabum, 2017). Role playing is used for solving real life situational problems where learners act roles they are assigned to in order to create an inspiring and real-life setting (Dorgu, 2015).

Teachers should bring home concepts that look absurd to the level the pupils will flow and participate during instruction. In essence, the teacher lays emphasis during learning. In affirmation, demonstration strategy offers useful opportunities for purposeful participation in learning that can enhance understanding of the concept. It has the potential advantage of being better, more visible with more impact (Wellington & Ireson, 2012). Demonstration enables concepts and processes to be observed directly and helps learners develop a scientific understanding. The teacher becomes a mediator and interpreter in the process (Monk & Osborne, 2000).

Teachers through asking questions during instruction make a judgement on how far they have imparted knowledge through the pupils' responses to his 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). 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 their understanding of a topic, link up with other ideas and be aware of what they know or not which helps in their appraisal. Questioning reliefs boredom among learners and allow them engage in academic challenges in order to understand the subject matter better (Rop, 2003). In order to have a better understanding of organizing questioning, Chin, (2004) came

up with a ten-item ways to encourage it which include: a) providing learners with suitable motivations to ask questions, b) modeling ways to ask question, c) providing question prompts or stems, d) using a question taxonomy, e) making learners to use e- learning journals to pose questions on weekly report, question board, question box or on line computer systems, f) establishing a question corner in the classroom to supply questions of the week, g) including a ‘free question time’ and brainstorm session during lessons, h) setting ‘question- making’ homework, i) including question-asking in evaluation, j) using interactive instructional approaches where pupils work in collaboration groups to generate questions, and k) creating a non- threatening classroom atmosphere where learners feel free to ask questions.

One of the roles of teachers is to ensure that pupils excel in their academic endeavors. In support, Srinivas and Venkalkrishina (2016) assert that to improve the academic performance of pupils, teachers should repeat concepts, provide them class and homework assignments, so that they can acquire complete understanding of the

concepts. To buttress more, Maina (2010) opines that pupils with positive attitude are ready for learning and have the desired academic outcomes

It is therefore on the aforementioned background that this study identifies effects of child-centered instructional strategies on academic performance of pupils.

1.2: Statement of Problem

Poor performance of pupils in primary schools is as a result of poor instructional strategies that do not stimulate learners to be active in class. Such strategies make learners to be passive and uninvolved. There is need to adopt instructional strategies that will involve and allow learners to be active, participatory, and strategies that will be age appropriate that will make learners to be actively involved during instruction. Teaching strategies that motivate pupils and make them to be creative is one of the trends of 21st century. Unfortunately, most teachers hardly adopt these measures in class. They prefer the traditional way of use of textbooks and workbooks that is usually teacher-centered (such strategies that do not involve learners actively) to strategies that are learner-centered (that make learners to be active

participants in class). Teachers lack skills in adopting learner-center activity based-strategies in class which bring into reality abstract concepts and allow pupils to be active in class. Children learn most through modeling and adequate scaffolding. Therefore, where there is lack to bring abstract contexts into reality through the use of demonstration, role playing, and questioning strategies, pupils' involvement will be very low in class. It is on this backdrop therefore that this research work was anchored.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The main objective of this study is to examine the effects of child-centered Instructional strategies on Pupils' academic performance. Specifically, the study sets out to:

- I. Identify the effectiveness of learner-centered based instructional strategies
- II. Examine ways role-play strategy enhances academic performance of pupils

1.4 Research questions

- 1. What is the effectiveness of learner-center based instructional strategies?
- 2. How does role playing instructional strategy enhance pupils' academic performance?

Methodology:

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A sample size of 120 teachers were drawn from 12 schools in Shomolu Local Government Area of Lagos state. Ten teachers were randomly selected from each school. Teachers in Primary 1-3 were randomly selected for the study. The questionnaire was used to elicit information from respondents. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentages and mean. Section A analyzed the demography of the teachers based on years of teaching experience of teachers and their highest qualifications which was analyzed using frequency count and percentages while section B analyzed the research questions using frequency counts, percentages and mean.

Data collection and analyses

Demographic report:

Distribution of Participants Based on Years of teaching Experience

Table 1.1:

Years of Teaching Experience	Number	Percentage %
1-10	50	41.7
11-20	28	23.3
21-30	22	18.3
31and above	20	16.7
Total	120	100

Result from **table 1.1** under years of teaching experience shows that the majority of the respondents 41.7% (n=50) have between 1 to 10years of teaching experience, 11-20years of teaching experience are 23.3%(n=28). This was followed closely by those who have been in

the system between 21-30years 18.3% (n=22), and those with over 31 years of teaching experience are 16.7%, (n=20). By implication of this result, most respondents have between 1-20 years of teaching experience. Therefore, experience is a variable in choice of instructional strategy.

Table 1.2

Distribution based on highest qualification

Highest Qualifications	Number	Percentage %
NCE	22	18.3
First Degree with Education (B.A.Ed., Bed, BSC. Ed)	57	47.5
Masters with Education	20	16.7
PGDE	11	9.2
Others	10	8.3
Total	120	100

Result from **table 1. 2** under highest qualifications show that the majority of the respondents 47.5% (n=57) are degree holders closely followed by NCE holders 18.3 % (22) and then masters holders, 16.7 %(n=20), then PGDE 9.2 % (11) and followed by others who may be TC11, or Degree without Education 8.3 % (10). By

implication of this result, most respondents have been graduates of education. Therefore, qualification is a variable in choice of instructional strategy.

Research question 1:

1. What is the effectiveness of learner-centered activity-based instructional strategies?

Table 1.3

Effectiveness of Learner-Centered Instructional Strategies							
S/N	ITEM	NUMBER	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN
	Pupils develop self-confidence as teachers ask questions	120	56(46.7%)	50(41.7%)	10(8.3%)	4(3.3%)	3.6
	Questioning encourages class participation		80(66.7%)	35(29.1%)	3(2.5%)	2(1.7%)	3.6
	Questioning stimulates pupils' interest		40 (33.3%)	49 (40.8%)	17(14.2%)	14(11.7%)	2.9
	Teachers draw facts from pupils through questioning		68(56.7%)	46(38.3%)	4(3.3%)	2(1.7%)	3.5
	Abstract concepts are		53(44.2%)	47(39.2%)	16(13.3%)	4(3.3%)	3.2

	brought to real life in role play						
	Role playing makes children to have manipulative and communication skills	63(52.5%)	44(36.7%)	11(9.1%)	2(1.7%)		3.4
	Role playing satisfies pupils curiosity	45(37.5%)	65(54.2%)	7(5.8%)	3(2.5%)		3.2
	Pupils' critical thinking is developed through role playing	48(40%)	59(49.2%)	10(8.3%)	3(2.5%)		3.2
	Demonstration helps pupils to imitate fast	56(46.7%)	52(43.3%)	7(5.8%)	5(4.2%)		3.3
	Demonstration helps pupils to observe with interest and understanding	60 (50%)	42(35%)	10(8.3%)	8(6.7%)		3.2
	Demonstration helps get	57(47.5%)	58(48.3%)	3(2.5%)	2(1.7%)		3.4

	pupils' attention while learning is going on						
	Demonstration helps motivate pupils to learn practical topics faster		70(58.3%)	38(31.7%)	10(8.3%)	2(1.7%)	3.4

Data collected from **table 1.3, items 1-12**, determines the effectiveness of learner-centered instructional strategies. The results indicate that item 1 has a mean score of 3.6, item 2 has a mean score of 3.6, item 3 has a mean score of 2.9 while item 4 has a mean score of 3.5. item 6 has a mean score of 3.4, item 7 has a mean score of 3.2 and item 8 has a mean score of 3.2, item 9 has a

mean score of 3.3 and item 10 has a mean score of 3.2 while item 11 has a mean score of 3.4 and item 12 has a mean score of 3.4. The outcome affirms that child-centered instructional strategies enhance academic performance of pupils.

Research question 2: How does role playing instructional strategy enhance pupils' academic performance?

Table 1.4

Role-Playing and Pupils' Academic Performance							
S/N	Item	NUMBER	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN
	In my teaching I make my pupils fit into roles we encounter	120	45(37.5%)	68(56.7%)	4(3.3%)	3(2.5%)	3.2
	I make learning more visible		50(41.6%)	60(50%)	5(4.2%)	5(4.2%)	3.2

through role playing						
To enhance pupils' verbal communication performance, I use role playing	65(54.2%)	51(42.5%)	3(2.5%)	1(0.8%)	3.5	
To encourage proper understanding of concepts I use role playing	47(39.2%)	62 (51.7%)	7(5.8%)	4(3.3%)	3.2	
I adopt role play during instruction because it encourages every learner to be a participant and an active learner	78(65%)	36(30%)	2(1.7%)	4(3.3%)	3.5	

Results: Table 1.4 items 13-17 on role-playing instructional strategy and pupils' academic performance has high respondents' affirmation as follows. Item 18 has a mean score of 3.2 and item 19 has a mean score of 3.2 while item 20 has a mean score of 3.5. Item 21 has a mean score of 3.2 and item 22 has a mean score of 3.5.

This shows that role-playing enhances pupils' academic performance.

Conclusion

Teachers' strategies to a great extent affect learning outcome of learners. Class participation enhances learning outcomes. The success of a teacher relies most on academic performance of pupils. Therefore, there is need for teachers to be abreast with

instructional strategies that are developmentally appropriate for pupils so that they will excel academically. Learners should be involved during instruction through child-centered instructional styles teachers bring to the fore. Where learners do not participate actively, learning outcome will be truncated.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations are worthwhile based on the findings of this research:

1. School heads should monitor the instructional strategies teachers use during instruction to ensure they are learner centered
2. Teachers should be trained and retrained to embrace learner-centered activity- based instructional strategies to make class more participatory and enhance learning outcomes
3. Inter class/school quizzes, debates and drama should be encouraged in schools to encourage utilization of these instructional strategies.
4. Teachers should regularly collaborate and have mentors to direct them, especially newly employed teachers so that they will have sense of direction on instructional

styles that are developmentally appropriate for the learners.

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