

NIGERIAN EDUCATION REFORM POLICY: IMPLICATION FOR CHALLENGED TEACHERS IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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Abstract

Education is a very powerful tool for every social progress and development. When a nation decides to make reforms in her education it means it is repositioning to attain higher heights. The Nigerian nation has remained a consumer nation without truly stimulating creative ingenuity in her citizenry to re-position her for productivity. The population for the study is 246 secondary school teachers. Stratified random sampling technique was used to compose the sample of the study. Through random sampling, 100 teachers were drawn from both urban and rural in Aba North, Obingwa and Ukwu East LGAs. Data was collected using questionnaire. Two hypotheses guided the study. The data collected were analyzed using mean scores while the null hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study reveals that teachers in the sample are not computer literate and their handicap is that they have no access to computer, and cannot attest using uniformity in strategized teaching. Recommendations are made based on the findings, among which is that government should provide necessary infrastructure to support massive training and deployment of skill manpower into secondary schools in particular.

Key words: Education Reform, Policy, Teachers and Millennium Development Goals

INTRODUCTION

Education is a very powerful tool for every societal progress and development. When a nation decides to make reforms in her education, it means it is repositioning to attain higher heights. Nuhu (2016) posits that no society can adequately attain a high educational development without paying adequate attention to its system, a central role in both its take-off stage as well as in the course of its implementation. Interestingly, “no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers, teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all education planning and development” (FRN, 2004:39)

Nigerian’s problem has never been lack of ideas (policies), but the will to implement such policies. On this premise, Akale (2014) averred that “educational policy is a system of administrative guidelines, rules and regulations put in place of direct employees towards the achievement of the national goals of education” if we agree with Akale, it then means that policy is a set goal to adequately guide the teachers in improving the learners effectiveness and efficiency to millennium development goals.

Consequently, the nomenclature of the teacher to change to the new policies has failed because these policies were put in place without strategic plans and developments. For example, the 6-5-4 system was changed to

6-3-3-4, the 5year secondary school programme was converted to the 3-3 system and recently the system changed to 9-3-4. All these could only be enhanced when human (teachers) and material facilities are upgraded and resources expanded.

It is said that the quality of teachers mirrors the quality of education in a nation. Indeed, the success of any educational system depends largely on the quality of teachers. Nuhu (2016) asserts that just as a solid foundation ensures stability and solidity of a house, high quality teachers engender high quality education. Unfortunately, the new millennium which is expected to be a period of technological and social change for Nigerian teachers has turned to be a foe in the administration of innovative education. There is need for educators to foster a variety of new type of literacy to make education relevant to the demands of the 21st century. The high priority goals of education include to develop critical thinking and problem solving abilities in the students. This is in line for secondary school teachers to achieve the new millennium development goals. To achieve this goal, emphasis should be on teaching strategies that encourage active learning, enquiry, discovery and exploration. According to Akubue (2007) these teaching strategies include: active learning, co-operative group work, project based instruction in order to build into students personal knowledge and cognitive skills.

The primary purpose of new millennium development goals (NMDGs) is to expand educational opportunities to all children, among other development imperatives, which include the sustainability of environmental friendliness, the emergency of new technologies, modernity in classroom practice and management as well as other activities that focus more on knowledge building. Recently, there is shift from oral information transmission and skills acquisition and in line to this development, Hooper (2000) agrees that technology has changed how students learn, the implication is that the teachers will automatically change how they teach. The focus of the teachers now should be on employing instructional method that drives to new generational knowledge. The teachers most threatened by modern technology (ICT) will be those who view teaching as content transmission only.

The challenge of teachers in the new millennium achievement will be to help students learn with modern technologies. This challenge has two dimensions according to Akubue in Hooper and Hokonson (2000). The first one is that teachers may need to establish methodologies that may conflict with the way that they were taught. Secondly teachers will need to understand the potential of new technologies such as computer systems and functionality. Teachers both in school and in-service need to know how to employ the dynamics of modern educational technology. As teachers prepare to learn how to integrate technology into the classroom, they will face different questions involving computer use. Apart from knowing how to operate computers, it is essential to know how to use technology to generate knowledge, such as in problem-solving, in instructional activities and in multidisciplinary purposes.

It therefore becomes a challenge facing Nigerian teachers in an attempt to achieve the dictates of modern literacy education. Previous empirical studies have shown that the influence of school mapping on teachers use of technological innovations in Nigeria will serve as a necessary steps towards the achievement of the NMDGs, hence the need for this study.

Purpose of the Study

1. To find out the extent to which teachers of rural and urban secondary schools use teaching technological innovations.
2. To determine the extent to which teachers' teaching experience influence teachers ability to use different teaching strategies.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do teachers of rural and urban secondary schools use teaching strategies in teaching?
2. How has teacher teaching experience influenced teachers ability to use different teaching strategies in teaching?

Hypotheses

The study was guided by two null hypotheses tested at the 0.05 level of significance

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between teachers in the rural schools and teachers in the urban schools on the use of teaching strategies.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between teaching experience and teachers ability to use difference teaching strategies

Methodology

This study is a descriptive survey of the challenges facing teachers in achieving the new millennium development goals. The population consists of all the public Senior Secondary School (SSS) teachers in Aba North, Obingwa and Ukwu East local government area of Abia State. There are 32 secondary schools in Aba North LGA with 96 senior secondary school teachers. The target population to the study is 246 senior secondary school teachers. Stratified random sampling technique was used to compose the sample of the study. Through random sampling, 44 teachers were drawn from urban schools while 56 teachers were drawn from rural schools. Data collection was done by the use of researcher developed instrument titled Questionnaire on the challenges facing teachers in achieving the goals of the new millennium (QCFT). The data collected were analyzed using mean score while the null hypotheses were tested using 't' test and ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance, hence presented at the table below.

Table: Frequency of the Teacher's Year of Teaching Experiences in the Area Content.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
0 – 4 years	6	6.0	6.0	6.0
5 – 10 years	36	36.0	36.0	68.0
11 – 15 years	30	30.0	30.0	38.0
16 – 20 years	18	18.0	18.0	84.0
21 and above years	19	14.0	14.0	
Total	100	100.0	100.0	100.0

Results and Discussion

Table 2: Knowledge and Awareness of Technological innovations.

S/N	Item	Location	Mean	Remark
1.	The teachers in my school are computer literate.	Rural	2.22	Disagree
		Urban	2.09	Disagree
2.	Learning of computer is difficult by me.	Urban	1.95	Disagree
		Rural	2.25	Disagree
3.	My problem in the use of the new technology is that I have no access to computer.	Urban	2.90	Agree
		Rural	3.29	Agree
4.	Location makes me not to benefit from the opportunities of technological innovations such as in interest system/usage	Urban	2.63	Agree
		Rural	2.92	Agree
5.	Information technological services can be used to improve teaching and learning in schools.	Urban	2.68	Agree
		Rural	3.14	Agree

Table 3: The Use of Teaching Strategies Mean Rating

S/N	Item	Location	Mean	Remark
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1	I use multidisciplinary approach in teaching	Rural	2.72	Often
		Urban	2.44	Sometimes
2	Teacher use instructional activities facilitate teaching and learning effectiveness.	Urban	3.04	Often
		Rural	2.77	Sometimes
3	The use of problem-solving technique encourages learner centredness.	Urban	3.0	Often
		Rural	3.1	Often

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the teachers in the rural schools and teachers in the urban schools on their use of different teaching strategies.

Table 4: t-Test Of Significance For The Difference Between Teachers In The Rural Schools And Teachers In The Urban Schools On The Teachers Teaching Strategies.

Item Summation									
Location	N	Mean	SD	Std. error	Degree of freedom	t-value	Table F	Decision Rule	
Urban	44	8.7727	2.2605	.3408	97	.860	2.00	Not significant	
Rural	55	8.4000	2.0421						

The data presented in table 4 above show that the calculated t-value is .860, the critical 't'-value 2.00 and 97 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. The presentation implies that since the calculated 't'-value is less than the table 't'-value, the H₀ is not rejected. It then means that there is no significant difference between teachers in the rural schools and teachers in the urban schools on their use of difference teaching strategies.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between teaching experiences and teachers ability to use different teaching strategies.

Table 5: One way ANOVA on the significance between teaching experiences and teachers ability to use different teaching strategies.

	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F	Sig.
Use of multidisciplinary approach					
Between groups	1.273	1	1.273	1.087	.300
Within groups	114.727	98	1.171		
Total	116.00	99			
Use of effective instructional activity					
Between groups	1.237	1	1,237	1.407	.238
Within groups	86.123	98	.879		
Total	87.360	99			
Use of problem-solving approach					
Between groups	.503	1	.503	498	4.82
Within groups	98.857	98	1.009		
Total	99.360	99			

The data presented in table 5 above indicate that the use of multidisciplinary approach with t-value of 1.087 and instructional activity with F value of 1.404 and problem-solving method with F value of .498 are not significant. The H₀ is hereby retained which means that there is no significant difference between teaching experience and teachers ability to use the different teaching strategies.

Discussion

Responses to questionnaire revealed the factors of teachers in improving teaching strategies through accepting the government education reforms packaged in the new millennium development goals. Teachers were faced with challenges, ranging from not having access to internet nor computer system hence they are accepting the challenges of the new millennium. The result of the data analysis in table 2 on teachers knowledge and awareness of technological innovations, using 2.5 as acceptance mean, revealed that both urban and rural teachers are not computer literate with a mean score of 2.09 and 2.22 respectively. Therefore teachers need to embrace the new technology and be knowledgeable enough to equip themselves for the teaching job.

With reference to teaching strategies, data in table 3 show that multidisciplinary approach is often used by teachers in the urban schools but teachers in rural schools sometime use it. Both uses instructional and problem solving approach and this is very interesting and encouraging. It implies that teaches are embracing divergent teaching strategies so as to facilitate learning and make teaching interesting. The teachers in this sample fall in line with Amadi (2014) who pointed out that tomorrow's challenges will demand innovative creative and informative teachers that is, teachers who have a clear perception of their personal and professional roles, the right attitude and approach to teaching. The analysis so far revealed that teachers are willing to accepting the educational reform policies through harmonization of the goals of the 21st century but challenged by the availability of technological innovations.

Conclusion

One of the major problems of Nigeria education is the gap between policy formation and the implementation of such policy. Education is very vital in the overall development in any nation, and to achieve it, integrating ICT across curricular, availability of pedagogically sound materials and contents will ensure educational reforms for optimization of service delivery by teachers in education sector.

When computers are made available, urban and rural teachers show readiness in the use of technological innovation to enhance effective teaching and learning in the schools. Until government sticks to policy implementation, teachers will be poised with the achievement of millennium development goals as captured in technological innovative education.

Recommendations

1. Provision of necessary infrastructural support and massive training and deployment of skill manpower into secondary schools in particular, should be made.
2. While we have a national policy, regional interest should be considered so that the environment could generate part of the content to be learnt.
3. Teachers in-training should be ready to embrace the goals, objectives and aims of the new millennium goals in order to avoid pit-falls technology usage.

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