

PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION OBJECTIVES AND PUPILS DEVELOPMENT

Adebola O. Jaiyeoba
University of Ibadan

Abstract

The study was set out to examine the primary school teachers' awareness of primary education objectives, their perception of the teaching profession and their concern for the affective and cognitive development of pupils' in primary schools, in Ibadan North Local government area of Oyo State Nigeria. To achieve the objective, four research questions were raised. The design adopted in carrying out the study was descriptive research design. The population of the study covered all the 1,821 teachers in the 74 public primary schools in Ibadan North local government area of Oyo State. Using the simple random sampling method, 50% of the schools were sampled giving a sample of 37 schools. The probability proportionate to size (PPS) sampling technique was used to sample 454 teachers. The data for the study, generated through the use of self-constructed but validated questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.87 were analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentages. The findings of the study revealed that an average of 72.35% of the teachers sampled have the knowledge of primary school education objectives in Nigeria. However, below average of the teachers perceived teaching as a lucrative profession (43.57%). Also, majority of the teachers have interest in the cognitive and affective development of their pupils. Finally, some problems which include irregularity in salary payment, inadequate teachers' textbooks, and inadequate provision of school supervision among others were identified as impediments to effective performance of primary school teachers. Based on the findings, it was recommended that government should pay teachers' salaries regularly, intensify inspection of schools, purchase and supply current textbooks adequately to schools among others.

Introduction

Nigeria is not left out of the countries that subscribe to the fact that education is a veritable means of effecting national development. To this end, government, private individuals and organizations have established educational institutions at all levels in order to satisfy the educational needs and aspiration of the people. However, the stakeholders' aspiration and expectation from education industry dash out daily, because of misfit of products from our educational system.

The primary education plays an important role in the life of an individual as well as the nation as a whole. The National Policy on Education (2004) refers to the education at this level as the education given in institutions for children aged 6 to 11 plus. The document added that since the rest of the education system is built upon it, the primary level is the key to the success or failure of the whole system.

Education is believed to be life, hence, Obemeata (1996) stated that education is the development of the whole man; soul, body, intellect, will, emotion and physical well-being. The products from our primary schools especially public primary schools, still leave members of the public in doubt as to whether any learning has taken place in the course of schooling. The reading, writing and numeracy skills that are expected to be acquired at the primary school level are even disappearing and this is giving a lot of concern to the

stakeholders in education. A lot of factors might be responsible for this. In fact, Bassey, Ekpoh and Edet (2008) identified the following emerging problems of Universal Basic Education scheme to include conflict of management, inadequacy of essential working materials and infrastructure, skeletal implementation of policy, lack of qualified teachers for skills acquisition, problem of monitoring, ignorance by the teachers and lack of political will. Since the products from this level of education are the entrants into secondary level, there could be multiplier effects not only at secondary level but higher education as well. If the blind spots in the Nigeria educational system are to be “healed” by academics and policy makers, it is necessary to start from the foundation which is the primary level and the role of teachers is very important.

The inculcation of the right type of attitude, values and skills at school level is made possible through teaching. Jekayinfa (2001) in Atanda, Adeyemi and Adebisi (2006) defined teaching as a vehicle for education. This means that teaching shoulders the responsibility of delivering the good of education. Olatunji (1996) described teaching as a social function that aims at guiding the necessary growth in others while Nwachi (1991) in Atanda and Lameed (2006) viewed it as the imparting of knowledge from one person to another and the guiding of someone to behave in a particular manner.

Teaching therefore cannot be done by just anybody because it involves a body of knowledge being imparted to a less experienced or immature person through conscious and deliberate approach (Frankena, 1965). We can infer from this, that teaching as a process requires some-knowledgeable personalities, who offer the necessary knowledge and skills to another person.

To Kochher (2003), teacher is a vital component of school administration. The teacher stands at the most important point in the educational process and must therefore be well versed in the art of teaching. This means that a personality called teacher must have acquired the skills required to perform his/her role. This is why Akinpelu (2003) described a teacher as someone who underwent a long period of socialized training and is regarded as moral instructor, moral educator and a moral model for his students. Hence, Atanda and Lameed (2006) referred to a teacher as a professional who imparts skills, knowledge, information, and attitude among others to the learner.

The quality of teachers found in our primary schools goes a long way in determining the quality of products from this level of education. In recognition of this, the National Policy on Education (2004) affirms that no education can rise above the quality of its teachers. Thus, European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (2005) observed that teachers are the single most important learning resources available to most students, as such, it is imperative for those who teach to possess full knowledge and understanding of the subject they are teaching, acquire the necessary skills and experience to transmit their knowledge and understanding effectively to students. Quality teachers are therefore required for necessary transformation in our primary schools.

Writing on quality teacher, Adegoke (2004) submitted that, a quality teacher is one who is worthy, efficient, excellent, conforming, relevant, literate and morally upright. Adding to that, Etuk, Etudor, Nwaoku and Etuk (2006) said, such a teacher is one who has a quantifiable ability to produce growth in student’s achievement. Thus Hanushek, Kain and Rivkin (2002) confirmed that teacher quality is the most important schooling factor while explaining quality among schools. They found that effects of teachers quality on students

were much larger than other commonly measured school attributes like class size and instructional materials.

From the above, the knowledge of objectives of primary school education is therefore important to primary school teachers as this will contribute to their quality of performance. This is because, to contribute to the achievement of objectives which one does not share in, will be very difficult. Apart from this, there are some other problems which affect teacher quality and in turn affect students' performance. Amongst these problems are irregularities in salary payment, poor status of teacher and meager salaries (Hoyle 1989, Ayeni and Adu 2001). If these problems still persist, there is tendency for the "blind spots" in Nigeria educational system to escalate the more.

The stakeholders' aspiration and expectation from education industry dash out daily, because of misfit of products from our educational system. Since pupils are not meant to educate themselves, teachers are required, the quality of these teachers therefore is fundamental in achieving the expected objectives. However, the teacher quality is a function of a number of factors. It is against this background that the study was set out to investigate, primary school teachers quality via their knowledge of objectives of primary education, perception of their profession as well as their concern in the affective and cognitive development of learners (who are actually their students) in Oyo State.

Research Questions

Based on the background, the following research questions were raised;

1. Do primary schools teachers have the knowledge of objectives of primary education in Nigeria?
2. How do primary school teachers perceive the teaching profession?
3. Do primary school teachers have concern for affective and cognitive development of the pupils?
4. What are the problems perceived by primary school teachers as hindrance to their effective performance?

Methodology

The design adopted in carrying out the study was descriptive research design. The population of the study covered all the 1,821 teachers in the 74 public primary schools in Ibadan North local government area of Oyo State. Using the simple random sampling method, 50% of the schools were sampled making 37 schools. In the 37 schools there are 907 teachers. 50% of the 907 teachers were further sampled through the use of probability proportionate to size (PPS) sampling technique, thus giving us 454 teachers. The instrument used for data collection was a twenty-two item self-designed questionnaire titled "Teachers Awareness of Objectives, Affective and Cognitive Development Questionnaire (TAOACQ)". It was face and content validated by experts in the field. Cronbach alpha was computed to determine its reliability and this gave an internal consistency of 0.87 reliability coefficient. Out of the 454 questionnaires, 448 responded representing 98.68% of the study sample. The data generated were analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentages.

Results and Discussion

Research Question one (1): Do primary school teachers have the knowledge of objectives of primary education in Nigeria?

Table 1: Teachers Awareness of Objectives of Primary Education

s/n	Items	SA / A	D / SD
1.	Primary education aims to inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy and ability to communicate effectively.	362 (80.80)	86 (19.20)
2.	Primary education is to lay sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking	324 (72.32)	124 (27.68)
3.	Primary education is expected to give citizenship education	282(62.95)	166(37.05)
4.	Primary education is expected to mould the character and develop sound attitude and morals in the child	347(76.56)	105(23.44)
5.	Primary education develops in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment	272(60.71)	176(39.29)
6	Primary education gives the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable him function effectively in the society	405 (90.40)	43(9.60)
7.	Primary education provides the child with basic tools for further educational advancement	281(62.72)	167(37.28)
	Total / Average Percentage	2269(72.35)	867(27.65)

The results on table 1 showed that majority of teachers sampled are aware of the objectives of primary school education. This is because 80.80% of them are aware of inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy by primary education, 72.32% of the teachers consented to the fact that primary school education is to lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking. Moreover, 62.95% are aware of the importance of primary education in giving citizenship education while 76.56% revealed their awareness of primary education in moulding the character and developing sound attitude and morals in the child. Furthermore, 60.71% of the teachers sampled revealed their awareness of primary education in developing in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment while 90.40% of the teachers are aware of the importance of primary school in giving the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable him to function effectively in the society. Finally 62.72% of the respondents agreed that primary education provides the child with basic tools for further educational advancement.

In summary, the response of the teachers sampled revealed that average of 72.35% of them are aware of the objectives of primary education, the level at which they teach. One will expect therefore that, this will enhance their contribution towards the achievement of these objectives. This is because, a person that knows nothing or little of the objectives of the organization where he works may find it difficult to contribute meaningfully toward the achievement of the goals of that organization, and vice versa.

Research Question two (2): How do primary school teachers perceive the teaching profession?

Table 2: Primary School Teachers Perception of Teaching Profession

s/n	Items	SA /A	D / SD
8	Teaching is a lucrative profession	176(39.29)	272(60.71)
9	It is a profession in which you can have contentment	205(45.54)	243(54.24)
10	It is a profession in which in you can desire pleasure	195(43.53)	253(56.47)
11	I enjoy keeping the diary of works and other records necessary for the profession	248(55.36)	200(44.64)
12	I find it difficult to like other job apart from teaching	152(33.93)	296(66.07)
	Total / Average Percentage	776(43.57)	1264(56.43)

Table 2 displays the result of research question two. The question is to find out the perception of primary school teachers regarding their profession, so as to know whether they perceive their profession as being more important than any other occupation. From the finding 176 respondents consented to the fact that teaching is a lucrative profession and this represents 39.39% while 272 representing 60.71% disagreed with the claim. This shows that majority of the sampled teachers do not see teaching as a lucrative profession. 205 representing 45.54% of the sampled teachers regarded teaching as a profession in which one can derive contentment while 243 representing 54.24% affirmed that one cannot have contentment with teaching. The implication is that, the majority who are not contented could take teaching with levity since they are likely to be looking for alternative job. Further, 195(43.53%) of the teachers said that pleasure can be derived from the teaching job while 253(56.47%) disagreed. This means that majority do not desire pleasure in the job and this can also be an impediment to successful teaching. However, 248(55.56%) of the teachers claimed that they enjoy writing their scheme of work and keep other records regularly as demanded by the profession while 200(44.64%) disagreed.

Since some of the respondents confirmed that they do not derive pleasure in the profession, this may be applicable to keeping of school records. The regularity in keeping school records may however be attributed to their awareness of legal sanction or penalty from their employer if otherwise. Only 152(33.93%) said they find it difficult to do other job apart from teaching, while 296(66.07%) disagreed with this. It means that majority are in the profession because of the absence of the job they desired. This will eventually affect the quality of their work. In summary, Average of 43.57% take teaching profession as being more important than any other profession while 56.43% do not take it as an important profession which they should belong.

Research Question Three (3): Do primary school teachers have concern for affective and cognitive development of their pupils?

Table 3: Primary school teachers and pupils Affective and Cognitive Development

s/n	Items	SA / A	D / SD
13	The academic excellence of my students is my joy	272(60.71)	176(39.29)
14	I delight in my students proficiency in English language and numeracy skills.	305(68.08)	143(31.92)
15	I can afford gift to brilliant students in class	234(52.23)	214(47.77)
16	The mode of dressing of my students is my concern	324(72.32)	124(27.68)
17	Training in character formation is part of my duty as a teacher	348(77.69)	100(22.3)
	Total / Average Percentage	1483(66.21)	757(33.79)

The information on table 3 is the result of research question three. 272(60.71%) of the respondents agreed that the academic excellence of students is their joy. It means they are interested in the progress of their students. Moreover, 305(68.08%) are delighted in the proficiency of their students in English language and numeracy skills, while 234(52.23%) said they can afford gift to brilliant students in their class. All these show that they have concern for the cognitive development of their pupils. In the affective domain, 324(72.32%) of the teachers affirmed that the mode of dressing of students is their concern while 348(77.69) agreed that training in character formation is part of their duty. In summary, average of 66.21% respondents confirmed that primary school teachers have concern for the affective and cognitive development of their pupils.

Research Question Four (4) What are the problems perceived by primary school teachers as hindrance to their effective performance?

Table 4: Perceived Problems Hindering Effective Performance of Teachers.

s/n	Items	SA / A	D / SD
18	Irregularity in payment of salaries is affecting my job performance	429(95.76)	19(4.24)
19	Inadequate provision of teachers textbooks hinders effective teaching	415(92.63)	33(7.37)
20	Congested classroom is a problem to my teaching	110(24.55)	338(75.45)
21	Denial of further training by Ministry of Education bothers me and thus affects my performance	248(55.36)	200(44.64)
22	Irregularity in supervision is an impediment to effective teaching	372(83.04)	76(16.96)

Table 4 contains result of research question four. It reveals the perceived problems to effective teaching in primary schools. 429(95.76%) confirmed that irregularity in salary payment affect their job performance. This is evidenced in the present administration when about four months' salaries were owed by the state government. This gives a set back to the workers including teachers in the State. 415(92.63%) said inadequate provision of teachers' textbooks hinders effective teaching. Insignificant number of respondents indicated congested classroom as a problem to effective teaching i.e. 110(24.55%). However, 248(55.36%) indicated that denial of further training by Ministry of Education bothers them and therefore affect their performance, while irregularity in supervision is viewed by 372 (83.04%) respondents as one of the impediments to effective teaching.

Conclusion

The position of educational institution in realizing the educational objectives /goals cannot be over emphasized. In Nigeria, formal education is received in three levels which are primary, secondary and tertiary. In each of these levels, the foundational level plays a vital role and this is the primary level. This level serves as a basis for other subsequent levels and it is open to every citizen. In Nigeria today, this level of education has been made compulsory and universal by the government to show its great importance.

However, the objectives of the primary education may be elusive, if the teaching force required to implement the curriculum is deficient. The study therefore, set out to investigate the extent to which primary school teachers have the knowledge of primary education objectives, their perception of teaching profession and their concern for the affective and cognitive development of learners in Ibadan North Local Government, Area of Oyo State.

The study revealed among others that majority of the teachers sampled are aware of the objectives of primary education, which include, inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy and ability to communicate effectively, laying a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking, giving citizenship education, moulding the character and development of sound attitude and morals in the child, developing in the child ability to adapt to his changing environment, giving the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable him to function effectively in the society and to providing the child with basic tools for further educational advancement.

Also, majority of the teachers sampled perceived teaching profession poorly. Some of the them prefer other professions, while majority do not derive pleasure in the profession writing their lesson plan. More than average of the sampled teachers showed concern for affective and cognitive development of their pupils. Some problems highlighted as impediment to effective performance of primary school teachers include, irregularity in salary payment, inadequate provision of teachers' textbooks, denial of further training by ministry of education and irregularity in supervision of schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, following recommendations are made:

- That government should endeavor to pay teachers salaries as and when due since this is their main source of living.
- Current textbooks of good quality should be purchased by government and adequately distributed to schools so as to equip teachers with necessary textbooks if best is required of them.
- Teachers in primary schools should be given the orientation on how to proceed on further studies by the education ministry. It is when teachers are current in their discipline that they can give the pupils expected quality instructions.
- Finally, schools have to be supervised regularly to ensure qualitative education in our public primary schools.

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Adebola O. Jaiyeoba

adebolajaiyeoba@yahoo.co.uk

Tel#: 08037218010

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN