

TEACHERS' EFFECTIVENESS AS A TOOL FOR STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BAYELSA STATE

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Abstract: This paper addresses the problem of job effectiveness among teachers in junior secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The paper provides an in-depth explanation of the concept drawing upon established definitions and analysis of the term from scholars and practitioners in the field. Similar and related construct such as job performance and productivity were adequately examined and their relationship with teaching effectiveness explored. The paper provided a robust presentation of pertinent characteristics of effective teaching under four clusters of professionalism, thinking/reasoning, expectations and leadership. Strategies for the measurement of teachers' effectiveness were stated including students rating, peer rating, self-evaluation, and principals ratings. Some factors influencing teaching effectiveness such as professional qualification, teaching experience, school facilities, teaching aid and remuneration were discussed. The paper recommended suggesting possible strategies for the improvement of teaching effectiveness.

Keywords: Teachers, Students' performance, teachers' effectiveness.

1. INTRODUCTION

The centrality of education to the development of any society has been well acknowledged, documented and promoted in almost all of human existence. In one society or the other, or one period or the other, it is an established fact that a system of instruction has been implemented which is widely accepted for the direction of the younger generation to become productive and meaningful contributors to societal development. From classical times, nation-states like Sparta, Rome and Athens have formulated goals, albeit unwritten that have guided the educational trajectory of their respective societies. During the Middle Ages, the Church had formulated its own policies of education which were well executed through the building of monasteries and the proselytism of people into the Christian faith (Muller, 2010).

In contemporary times, all nations of the world including Nigeria, have formulated educational goals and philosophies believed to guide the nation in developing competent manpower and responsible citizenry. In Nigeria, these goals are embedded in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). The broad objectives of this policy are:

- i. the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
- ii. the inculcation of the right type of value and attitude for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;
- iii. the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around, and;

- iv. the acquisition of appropriate skills and development of mental, physical and social ability and competencies for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

To show governmental commitment to the educational development of the country, the country has signed various documents making commitments to educational development such as the Education for All (EFA) and the recent Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as invested massively in both human and financial resources. Despite this huge investment, according to Abdusalami (2009: 91), “in the court of public opinion and professional stakeholders, there is unanimous verdict that the outcome is not commensurate to the investment.” According to Duze (2011:1), this failed outcome is common across all tiers of education. In metaphorical terms, he stated that “a malnourished primary level brews a kwashiokored secondary level that culminates into a comatose tertiary level”. This has been a source of concern to various stakeholders which has generated a lot of inquiry into the factors that could be responsible for low achievement in education. Among the factors identified is the issue of teacher effectiveness.

This trend has become very obvious at the junior secondary level. At this stage, which is expected to provide students with knowledge on prevocational courses, most teachers do not display the required level of effectiveness. Most teachers seem out of touch with current teaching practice. To others, the required job of a teacher is the completion of the syllabus, while others seem only uninterested in the general learning experiences of their students and thus only focused on giving tests and examinations, without adequate feedback to the students. This has made this paper on teacher effectiveness at the secondary level a pertinent one, especially at the junior secondary school level in Bayelsa State. In most schools in Bayelsa State, the established system of teachers’ evaluation has often been directed at done haphazardly with little or no inputs from teachers or students. Furthermore, teachers are confronted with large number of students, which often limits the impact teachers make in promoting optimal performance in students learning.

2. CONCEPT OF TEACHERS EFFECTIVENESS

Although a concept of great significance and interest, teacher effectiveness has been conceptualized and operationalized differently by countless authors and scholar. Teacher effectiveness is an abstract construct that cannot be pointed to or measured directly, but most scholars agree it is a multidimensional construct meaning that it has multiple components and dimensions (Falaye & Awopeju, 2012). In the opinion of Zainudin, Junaidah and Nazmi (2010), teachers’ effectiveness is one of the most crucial factors in the success of any educational programme. This they explained is because teachers are directly involved in the educational process and are responsible for imparting to students knowledge and acceptable behaviour. Thus, teachers’ effectiveness in the school is an essential aspect to focus on to produce world-class teaching and to maintain talented human capital (Teh, Wong & Ngerang, 2011). Sadly, most teachers are not effective on their jobs, as evident in casualness, little effort, lack of zeal and failure to meet set objectives of students learning. To clearly establish reasons for poor effectiveness among teachers, it is first of necessary to understand what the concept of teaching effectiveness implies.

While an abstract concept, most authors agree that teaching effectiveness is made is made up of indicators that can be measured directly. Sonnentag, Volmer, and Spsychella (2010) stated that at the most basic level, job effectiveness can be distinguished into a process and an outcome aspect. The process also called the behaviour aspect refers to what people do while at work. Thus, the behaviour which people show can be used as indicators of teaching effectiveness. Examples of such behaviour include presentation of learning experiences, preparation of lesson notes and use of illustrations to concretize class instructions, etc. The outcome aspect refers to the result of teacher behaviour. These results might be improving students understanding of abstract concepts, increased performance in examination, problem-solving skills, critical thinking, etc.

Teaching effectiveness as captured by Onyeachu (1999) is the capacity of a teacher to engage in different aspects of teaching such as subject mastery, effective communication, lesson preparation and presentation, as well as personal interaction with students and other members of staff. The multidimensional approach to teaching effectiveness is also recognized in the definition of Awotua-Efebo (2004) which is endorsed by most educational researchers as the most encompassing definition of the construct. Awotua-Efebo defined it as behaviours or actions that are relevant to the goals of the educational institution. This definition is accompanied by two notions: (i) teaching effectiveness should be defined in terms of behaviour rather than results; (ii) teaching effectiveness should include only behaviours that are relevant to the instructional goals. Although this notion of performance has been accepted by most educationist, others have criticized it

on grounds that it is difficult to differentiate between behaviour and results (Abdulkadir, 2006). Therefore, scholars such as Viswesren and Ones (2000) have defined teaching effectiveness as scalable actions, behaviours and outcomes that teachers engage in or bring about that is linked with and contribute to the achievement of educational goals.

More direct definitions of teaching effectiveness have been provided by other scholars. An example provided by Hunt (2009) defined teachers' effectiveness as the collection of characteristics, competencies, and behaviors of teachers at all educational levels that enable students to reach desired outcomes, which may include the attainment of specific learning objectives as well as broader goals such as being able to solve problems, think critically, work collaboratively, and become effective citizens (p. 1)

Aina (2013) defined an effective teacher as one who consistently achieves goals which either directly or indirectly focus on the learning of the students. A further definition of teacher effectiveness was provided by Dunkin (2007) as the degree to which a teacher achieves the desired effect upon students. He also differentiated it from teacher competence which is the extent to which the teacher possess the requisite knowledge and skills, and teacher performance as the way a teacher behaves in the process of teaching. Similarly, Akpan (1996) defined teaching effectiveness as the achievement of all or most of the learning objectives and reduction of differences in cognitive levels among the students. Afe (2003) conceptualized effective teaching as the type of teaching characterized by the exhibition of intellectual, social and emotional stability, love for children and positive disposition towards the teaching profession and ability to inspire good qualities in students. Darling-Hammond and Adamson (2010) defined an effective teacher as one who is intellectually challenging, motivating students, setting high standards and encourages self-initiating learning. Furthermore, Wurai (2013) sees effective teachers as those who achieve the goals which they set for themselves or which have been set for them by others such as ministries of education, legislators and other government officials and school administrators. Effective teachers must possess the knowledge and skills needed to attain the goals, and must be able to use that knowledge and those skills appropriately if these goals are to be achieved (Borich, 1992)

From the various definition provided above, teacher effectiveness can be defined as the ability of the teacher to make use of verbal communication, knowledge of subject matter, interaction with students and student motivation in the classroom situation, to create an environment which will develop in the students ability, employability skills, work habits, good attitudes towards self and others, and provide them with necessary information which will enable the students to solve their present and future life problems. This definition is an integration of the need to provide a definition that captures not only the teaching process but also the outcome of the teaching process.

3. CHARACTERISTICS ASSOCIATED WITH EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

Teacher characteristics are relatively stable traits that are related to and influence the way teachers practice their profession. These characteristics are organized into four 'clusters' as proposed by Pariharraj (2011). These include professionalism, thinking/reasoning, expectations and leadership. The clusters, their characteristics and brief descriptions as provided by Pariharraj (2011) is presented below in Table 1

Table 1: Clusters of Effective Teaching

Cluster	Characteristic	Description
Professionalism	Commitment	Commitment to doing everything possible for each student and enabling all students to be successful
	Confidence	Belief in one's ability to be effective and to take on challenges
	Trustworthiness	Being consistent and fair; keeping one's word
	Respect	Belief that all individuals matter and deserve respect
Thinking/reasoning	Analytical thinking	Ability to think logically, break things down, and recognize cause and effect
	Conceptual thinking	Conceptual thinking Ability to identify patterns and connections, even when a great deal of detail is present
Expectations	Drive for improvement	Relentless energy for setting and meeting challenging targets, for students and the school

	Information seeking	Information seeking Drive to find out more and get to the heart of things; intellectual curiosity
	Initiative	Initiative Drive to act now to anticipate and pre-empt events
Leadership	Flexibility	Ability and willingness to adapt to the needs of a situation and change tactics
	Accountability	Accountability Drive and ability to set clear expectations and parameters and hold others accountable for performance
	Passion for learning	Passion for learning Drive and ability to support students in their learning, and to help them become confident and independent learners

4. MEASUREMENT OF TEACHERS EFFECTIVENESS

Historically, student ratings have dominated as the primary measure of teaching effectiveness for the past 30 years (Seldin, 1999). However, over the past decade there has been a trend toward augmenting those ratings with other data sources of teaching performance. Such sources can serve to broaden and deepen the evidence base used to evaluate courses and assess the quality of teaching (Arreola, 2000 and Knapper & Cranton, 2001). Some of these methods that have been proposed and utilized in assessing teachers' effectiveness as identified by Berk (2005) and Pariharraj (2011) include:

- **Student ratings:** Students' rating of teaching effectiveness has been extensively used in assessing the quality of education especially at the higher education level (Harvey, 2003). While the general purpose of requesting students to rate teachers is to ensure that programme effectiveness is ensured, Coughlan (2004) identified other purposes to providing accountability to parents and using the information to address perceived shortfall in programme delivery.
- **Peer ratings:** Peer ratings refers to an aspect of formative evaluation of teachers that is done by their peers. While, this generally does not include aspect of course delivery, it often assesses aspect as cooperation, delegation of authority, willingness to assist colleagues, etc. It is seldom used in teaching effectiveness evaluation due to an increased tendency for bias (Schwartz, 2018)
- **Self-evaluation:** Self-evaluation is an assessment process that involves the teacher determining how they have been effective in different aspects of teaching including time-management, classroom management, students' relationship and content delivery (Bandeke & Oluwatayo, 2014).
- **Alumni ratings:** Alumni rating is a form of rating that is done by students who have been previously taught by a particular teacher. The alumni rating is done in line with the students' experiences during the period of instruction. For greater reliability, the ratings can be correlated with that of the current students as done by Overall and Marsh (1980). Alumni ratings go beyond the general topics in traditional students' rating to include other aspects such as usefulness of course requirements, attainment of program outcomes, effectiveness of admissions procedures, preparation for graduate work, preparation for the real world, etc.
- **Administrator ratings:** This is one of the commonest rating method used. Here the people a teacher reports to such as principals, head of department, ministry supervisors, etc undertake the assessment. The person acting in this capacity may observe the teacher repeatedly and document their observation in an established scale developed for that purpose (Berk, 2005).
- **Learning outcome measures:** The above mentioned methods of rating teachers' effectiveness are all direct. Learning outcome measures is an indirect evaluation methods because teaching performance is inferred from students' performance. Furthermore, research has shown that there is a significant positive correlation between students' ratings on a course and their performance on final examination (Cohen, 1981).

These appraisal methods can be used independently or collectively. But Berk (2005) and Pariharraj (2011) recommended that more than one form of approach should be adopted to provide a more holistic understanding of the concept, as well as greater integration in developing teacher competence.

5. FACTORS INFLUENCING TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

The factors which contribute to and influences teaching effectiveness has been documented in literature and effort continues to be invested in ascertaining the various factors that influence teachers' effectiveness. In this section, some identified factors that determine teaching effectiveness are briefly presented.

- **Professional Qualification:** Across the years, the teaching profession which was seen as a noble profession has been taken over by individuals who lack adequate professional training. Onyekuru and Ibegbunam (2013) reported that the low employment opportunities prevalent in most countries, including Nigeria, have contributed to the high level of non-professional teachers to consider teaching as a stop-gap which should be jettisoned as soon as their dream jobs are obtained. Professional teachers are those who possess relevant training in education for their teaching subjects up to a minimum level (Chacko, 1981). For instance, a chemical engineer who teaches chemistry, physics or mathematics in a secondary school is regarded as a non-professional teacher as he neither received training in physics education, chemistry education nor mathematics education as the case may be. Such teachers are not familiar with the teaching pedagogy; they are likely to display low motivational level and may not bother much about their efficiency or teaching effectiveness. This is likely to be the situation in Bayelsa State as most schools, are manned by individuals who are not professionally qualified, which also includes some who are just secondary school graduates.
- **Teaching Experience:** This refers to the number of years that a person has been actively engaged as a teacher in the teaching and learning process. Here, the experience of a teacher is adjudged based on duration in the service. It is believed that the more the years spent in service in a particular discipline such as teaching the more one gains experience and becomes more knowledgeable in what it takes to enhance productivity or achievement of students in their academic work. When teachers have not spent many years in the teaching field, it is likely that their effectiveness in service delivery in the classroom may not be as strong as older teachers. This can affect the academic achievement of students. This was confirmed by the research result of Onyekuru and Ibegbunam (2013) who found out that among teachers in Emohua Local Government Area, Rivers State, teaching experience was a significant factor that contributes to their level of effectiveness as perceived by the teachers.
- **Teacher Remuneration:** Remuneration refers to the salaries and benefits offered to a person on the basis of goal attainment established by the organization. With the current low remuneration of teachers, it is likely that this might contribute to poor teachers' effectiveness. Wurai (2013) opined that changes in teachers' pay are likely to affect education quality through two mechanisms: by influencing the efficiency of the school and by affecting teacher quality (Loeb & Page, 2000). They intuitively suggested that higher teacher pay may improve the efficiency of schools by reducing teacher turnover. Kingdon (1996) in a study in America suggests that teacher turnover can have a disruptive impact on student achievement by diverting district resources to the hiring process, weakening teacher collaboration, and eroding the bond or level of trust between students and teachers. He noted that increases in teacher salary could have an immediate negative impact on teacher turnover, thereby increasing a school's efficiency. Amalu (2013) found out that among secondary school teachers in Cross Rivers State, the perception of adequacy or otherwise of financial remuneration was positively related to various components of teachers' role performance such as lesson presentation, use of instructional materials and classroom evaluation. Furthermore, Arain (2009) investigated the impact of teachers' wages on the performance of students using data from the Programme for International Student Assessment over a seven-year period. In this analysis, the impact of teacher wages on students' achievement was assessed in different ways by using different yardsticks; starting salary, salary after 15 year of experience, salary per hour of net teaching time and salary ratio to GDP per capita and by using country scores, of 15 year old pupil enrolled in lower secondary school, in Organization for Economic Development (OECD) member countries. For this propose, PISA 2000, 2003 and 2006 survey data of students' scores were used. The independent variables "wages" was regressed on the dependent variable "students total mean country score." The results of these analyses gave an indication that there is a positive impact on teacher wages on students' performances.
- **School Facilities and Instructional Aids:** As humans, we interact with our social environment, as well as the physical environment. The importance of the physical environment in promoting effective teaching has been well captured by scholars and researchers. Dejong (1997) stated that the physical layout and design of the school could enhance certain instructional strategies, discourage others and have a significant impact on the discipline. As designers,

architects and school administrators develop future schools and learning spaces for the growing school populations, the process of designing building facilities is to be based on the intended curricular programs. This should encompass the attending populations, and available technologies should be the main guide to the design of these learning spaces. In basic terms, the facility should be designed to fit the intended curriculum and use. School facilities are the libraries, textbooks, chalkboards, pens and any other item which make the teaching-learning process possible and easier. While some scholars such as Ingersoll (2001) argued that a good teacher can teach anywhere and a willing student is capable of learning in spite of the setting, the importance of the social environment cannot be underrated. It is a simple fact that the school environment itself has largely untapped potential as an active contributor to the learning process. In each society, there are facilities other than classrooms that can contribute to the teaching and learning process. For learning to take place learners must have access to necessary information, materials and resources. They have to interact with tangible and intangible resources and processes to ensure appropriate levels of performance.

- **Teacher-Student Ratio:** Student-teacher ratio is the number of students who attend a school or university divided by the number of teachers in that institution. For example, a student-teacher ratio of 10:1 indicates that there are 10 students for every one teacher. The term can also be reversed to create a teacher-student ratio. Bayo (2005) opined that smaller classes benefit all pupils because of individual attention from teachers, but low-attaining pupils benefit more at the secondary school level. Pupils in large classes drift off task because of too much instruction from the teacher to the whole class instead of individual attention, and low-attaining students are most affected. Students benefit in later grades from being in small classes during early grades. Longer periods in small classes resulted in increases in achievement in later grades for all students. In reading and science, low achievers benefit more from being in small classes. The benefits of small class sizes reduce the student achievement gap in reading and science in later grades (Ajani & Kinyele, 2014).
- **Institutional Leadership:** In most human interactions, the influence of leadership on behaviour and performance has been adequately documented. Like most organizations, the school as a social institution depends on the way or manner in which a leader operates. While there exists a conglomerate of leadership styles that varies based on situations, there are three broad leadership styles namely autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire (Shamaki, 2015). The extent to which leaders exhibit these leadership styles and their effect on productivity has been well researched, however, there is no consensus on the most suitable leadership style. In Taraba State secondary schools, Shamaki (2015) found out that democratic style contributes the most towards teachers' effectiveness. In a related result, Inhangbe, Okecha and Obuzowa (2018) found that in addition to democratic leadership style, laissez-faire leadership style had a prominent positive influence on job effectiveness of senior secondary school in Edo Central Senatorial District of Nigeria.

6. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING TEACHERS' EFFECTIVENESS

As nation builders, the effectiveness of teachers cannot be left to chance. Rather, governmental agencies, private actors and even teachers themselves should be proactive in promoting the level of their effectiveness. Some suggestions on how teachers' effectiveness can be improved in Bayelsa State

- Recruitment of teachers should be done by experienced assessors who understand as well as can measure the personality and professional characteristics of teachers' effectiveness. This has the effect of significantly reducing the engagement of those who lack the personality traits, as well as professional competence for becoming effective teachers. This is suggested against the current practice in Bayelsa State where employment of teachers is done through political connections, ethnicity and other subjective reasons.
- Implementation of Performance Evaluation System: A performance evaluation system is aimed at primarily providing an equitable measurement of a workers' contribution through accurate appraisal of both the employee and employers on the extent to which agreed goals are achieved. Sadly, the case of most educational institutions in Bayelsa State do not follow established methods of performance evaluation. Most teachers are engaged through political patronage and nepotism. As such, such teachers cannot be disciplined. A positive performance evaluation system can easily identify those teachers not working optimally and help them improve, or terminate the services of those not willing to improve their effectiveness.
- Reducing the level of student-teacher ratio has the potential of promoting teacher effectiveness. One of the most fundamental principles of classroom management is crowd control. However, no matter the personal ability or

professional training of an individual, such individuals will not perform optimally if the class size is very large. This has evidently impacted on the performance teachers who are confronted with large number of students in Bayelsa State. It is therefore suggested that government reduce the class size through the establishment of more schools, engagement of more teachers and provision of specialized training on classroom management.

- Compensation and promotional opportunities should be promptly and adequately provided. Most teachers in Bayelsa State are not adequately compensated. For those in public secondary schools, they often are owed salaries after working. Periodic promotions are not reflected in salary structure. On the other hand, those in private secondary schools receive very little compensation for a large volume of work. To augment this daring situation, most teachers involve themselves in other business opportunities that have conflicting impact on their academic obligations. This should be greatly minimized. Government and private school proprietors should ensure that teachers are adequately compensated. In addition, those who are due for promotion should be promptly promoted. The current situation whereby teachers go for years without promotion after attending promotional interview should be minimized.
- Provision of good instructional teaching aids should be a top priority in schools in Bayelsa State. Teaching aids help students connect and visualize abstract concepts. In addition, they enhance time management and presentational skills of teachers. This has the cascading effect of aiding teachers' effectiveness and promoting students' retention. When teachers are not provided teaching aids, as it's the case in most schools in Bayelsa State, they may find it difficult to hold students' attention and localize abstract concepts in their lesson content.
- Teachers should be encouraged and supported to attend workshops and trainings of effective behaviour. The dynamics of today's world require that teaching methodologies of previous years are no longer effective as the students of this generation require different approaches. As such in-service training should be provided for teachers on the use of modern technology in connecting with students and improving learning.

7. CONCLUSION

The success of any nation depends on the standard and structure of educational policies and programmes available for its populace. Bayelsa State not being an exception has made its own policies on educational programmes which amongst others is aimed at providing the best possible education for her citizens to become meaningful contributors to national development. In this paper effort was focused on providing the nature, process and consequences of teachers' effectiveness. This was hinged on the fact that an effective teacher helps to understand and promote the fundamental principles of classroom behaviour, excellent use of teaching aid, as well as serve as an inspiration to students who are future leaders. As a concept of great importance, the factors contributing to teachers' effectiveness were adequately x-rayed, and germane suggestions for improvement within the context of Bayelsa State were provided.

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