



**A SURVEY OF TEACHERS' DISPOSITION TOWARDS
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BASIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM
IN THE NORTH CENTRAL GEO-POLITICAL ZONE OF NIGERIA.**

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Abstract

As the nation-wide efforts are being made to improve school system and implementation of new curricula for Basic and Senior Secondary Education in Nigeria, this researcher points to teachers as the most important factor in curriculum implementation. The purpose of this study is to investigate the disposition of teachers towards the implementation of Basic Education Curriculum in Nigerian schools. A survey research approach was adopted using a total sample of 406 Basic education teachers drawn from schools in the north central geo-political zone of Nigeria. Data were collected using an adapted Teacher Disposition Index and analyzed by computing the mean scores for each item of the index. Results showed that Nigerian teachers were disposed in only four out of ten principles measured in this study. There were low disposition, poor concepts of the subject alignments and poor determination to implement the curriculum. The researchers calls for invigorated sensitization of teachers to ensure effective implementation of the new curriculum.

Keywords: Implementation of basic education curriculum

Introduction:

In Nigeria education, Basic education as the foundation requires a sound knowledge of science and technology. This is not only because science and technology has tremendous impact on all social institutions but also because science teaching is virtually non-existent in

our primary schools (Danmole, 1998). The 9 years Basic Science and Technology Curriculum is a restructuring and re-alignment of the revised core curriculum for primary science and the integrated science of the junior secondary school currently in use.

The teachers understanding of the philosophy and objective of basic science and technology curriculum as observed by Odubunmi, that a teacher who does not understand the philosophy of a subject might find it difficult to teach the subject. This is a truism with respect to science teaching. Also, the objective provide the direction for implementation of the curriculum. Hence, it is pertinent to ensure that teachers understand the teaching requirement in the attainment of each of the objective in the basic science and technology curriculum. Furthermore, it is not a new phenomenon that a large number of school teachers demonstrate ignorance of the objective of science teaching especially at the primary school level (Danmole, 1998).

With the adoption of new curricula for Basic and Senior Secondary Education in Nigeria, there is a heightened spotlight on the teaching force on which the actual delivery of the curriculum depends. Concerns about the teaching force boarder on teachers' availability, capability and attributes. In terms of availability, questions are asked on the availability of qualified teachers for the new subjects. In terms of capacity, questions are whether the available teachers are effective or ineffective while questions on attributes point to the teachers' personal qualities.

Studies have indicated significant relationship between teachers' quality and learning outcomes (Byrne 1983; Darling & Hammond, 1999). Thornton (2006) agrees that teachers' quality makes a difference but wonders if this difference is solely attributed to content knowledge, or pedagogical expertise. "Or is there another form of knowledge that teachers bring to the enterprise of teaching that is a requisite for quality teaching performance which could be called disposition intelligence?" Thornton asserted that knowledge, skill and dispositions are embraced as essential elements of teacher quality; Schulte, Edick, Edwards & Mackiel (2010) also stated categorically that teacher qualities include the areas of content knowledge, pedagogical skill disposition. As he put it, "in order for teachers to be more than mere 'cogs' in a technical process, they must posses the disposition necessary to teach and reach student".

Dispositions may be defined as personal qualities or characteristic that are possessed by individuals including attitude, beliefs, interests appreciations, values and mode of adjustment (Rence, Taylor & Wasiesko, 2000). However, literature on disposition presents a confusing picture on what disposition really means. Singh & Stolof (2008) described disposition as "a vague construct which was difficult to define and measure". Katz (1993) referred to disposition as "patterns of behaviour exhibited frequently and in the absence of coercion and constituting habit of mind under some consciousness and voluntary control". Eberly & Oconner (2007) defined disposition as the tendency to respond in a specific way to certain conditions. Usher, Usher & Usher (2003) defined it by referring to "empathy, the views of others, self and authenticity, meaningful purpose and vision".

A significant number of studies have indicated that teachers' values, beliefs about students, about teaching and about themselves strongly influence the impact they have on learning outcomes (Combs, 1974; Bryne, 1983; Collins, Killeary & Stephenson 1999; Darling & Hammond, 1999).

This paper is an attempt to initiate research on the disposition of teachers towards the

implementation of the new national curricula. For many constraints, the study was limited to the Basic Education Curriculum and localized only in the north central geo-political zone of Nigeria. The question is: 'Are the teachers positively disposed to the effective implementation of the new Basic Education Curriculum?'

Statement of the Problem

Basic Science properly evolved from Integrated Science. Some relevant things in Integrated Science curriculum are still maintained in Basic Science Curriculum. Integrated Science is science presented to the Child such that the Child gains the concept of science, the commonality of approach to problems of scientific nature and an understanding of the role and function of science in everyday life and the world in which they live (FRN, 1984). Basic Science on the other hand is basic training in scientific skills required for human survival, sustainable development and societal transformation. Basic Science combines Science and Technology. Consequently, the problem of this study was to find out on the teaching force which borders on the teachers availability, capacity and attributes towards basic education curriculum.

Research Questions

1. Is there availability of qualified teachers for the teaching of Basic Education Curriculum?
2. Are the teachers effective or ineffective?
3. What are the teachers personal qualities

Method

A survey approach was adopted such that the observed variables were taken without manipulations. Samples were drawn from the north central geo-political zone of Nigeria. The zone is made up of 6 States and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Sample consisted of teachers who participated in sensitization workshops organized by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), North Central Zonal Office, Minna and facilitated by the researchers between 2012 and 2013. The workshops were localized in the north central geo-political zone with a purpose to sensitize basic education teachers' on the new basic education curriculum and its effective use. Distribution of participants was as below.

State	No. of participants
Benue	60
Kogi	100
Kwara	42
Nasarawa	50
Niger	40
Plateau	40
FCT Abuja	74
Total	406

The workshops were conducted serially in the states for a period lasting about 9 months. During each workshop, the researchers administered the research instrument. A Teachers' Disposition Index (TDI) developed & validated by Shettle et al (2010) was adopted and used for the study. The TDI was originally developed to align with the dispositions of effective teachers as specified under INTASC (1991) as model of standards for beginning teacher licensing and development. The INTASC model has 10 principles as follows.

- i. **Principle 1:** The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline (s) he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.
- ii. **Principle 2:** The teacher understands how children learn and develop and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social, and personal development.
- iii. **Principle 3:** The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.
- iv. **Principle 4:** The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
- v. **Principle 5:** The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behaviour to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
- vi. **Principle 6:** The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, non-verbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
- vii. **Principle 7:** The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.
- viii. **Principle 8:** The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual and social development of the learner.
- ix. **Principle 9:** The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.
- x. **Principle 10:** The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and wellbeing.

Disposition items were generated for each of the principles. Two unique constructs were measured using the items. These were presented as subscales of the index.

- 1) Sub-scale A – student centred
- 2) Sub-scale B – Curriculum – centred

The study focused on curriculum – centred sub-scale. The sub-scale had 20 items that distributed fairly on eight of the 10 principles. Adaptation involved careful modification of the constructs to fit into the curriculum of interest and inclusion of 2 new items to bring the number to 22.

Finally, the instrument used was a curriculum – centred TDI consisting of 22 items presented in a likert style, which required respondents to score their level of agreement with the statements from strongly agree to strongly disagree and “Not Sure”. A dry run of the adapted instrument gave a cronbach alpha coefficient $>.95$. This was in agreement with the original TDI for that sub-scale. Appendix A is the final TDI used.

Before each administration of the TDI, the researchers explained the purpose of the study and reassured the participants that their response had nothing to do with the workshop. Their responses will be strictly used for the study only. The instrument was, at every workshop, administered once on the 2nd day after launch break, and all were retrieved at one sitting. The administration of instrument lasted for less than 10 minutes.

The last workshop was conducted in Kwara State in January 2013. Data collation followed soon after. The collation involved lifting the score of the teachers on every item without manipulations.

Analyses was done via the computation of mean scores for every item. A high mean score was implicated as high reflection of the item in the teachers' characteristics. Items were graded as 'High' (H) or 'Low' (L) based on their mean scores. A mean score of 3 – 4 was graded as H while a mean score of 1 – 2 was graded as L.

After the grading, items were summed under H & L. Further collation was done to align the grading with the principles. Percentages were computed for each principle.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the mean scores of teachers for items and their grades.

Table 1: Mean scores by items and grade.

Item	\bar{x}	Grading
1	4	H
2	3	H
3	3	H
4	3	H
5	2	L
6	3	H
7	3	H
8	2	L
9	4	H
10	1	L
11	2	L
12	3	H
13	2	L
14	2	L
15	1	L
16	2	L
17	4	H
18	2	L
19	4	H
20	3	H
21	2	L
22	3	H

Table 2 presents the percentage of disposition per principle.

Table 2: percentage of H items per principle.

Principle	IT	HIT	LIT	% HIT	Reworks
1	4	3	1	75	Disposed
2	1	0	1	0	Not disposed
3	1	1	0	100	Disposed
4	0	0	0	0	Not disposed
5	1	0	1	0	Not disposed
6	1	0	1	0	Not disposed
7	4	4	0	100	Disposed
8	0	0	0	0	Not disposed
9	8	6	2	75	Disposed
10	0	0	0	0	Not disposed

Principle: INTASC principles.

IT: Number of items measuring the principle

HIT: Number of items graded H for the principle

LIT: Number of items graded L for the principle

% HIT: Percentage of H items for the principle

Teachers were disposed only in four out of the 10 INTAS principles. However it should be noted that 3 principles had no items because it was believed that items developed for principles 1 and 2 related to principle 4, items developed for 2 and 3 related to principle 8 while items developed for 7 and 9 related to principle 10. (Schulte et al 2010). Again the uneven distribution of items might have affected the result. Already principle 9 had the highest weight with 8 items against principle 3 which had only 1. This had implication for a further modification of the TDI for use in Nigeria. Generally, the final result should not be surprising, most of the teachers sampled had one complaint or the other about the curriculum during the sensitization workshop. The subject offerings, the material and environment were not satisfactory to them. Many teachers needed to enhance their dispositions in responding to school situations, students' abilities, background, cognitive development levels & interest in their teaching & learning process. As Brantley, Barron, Hicks & McIntyre (2006) put it “teachers must believe that they have the 21st century disposition to turn students on and not off to learn in culturally diverse settings”.

Fennimore – Smith (2004) stated that collaboration and reflection among teachers, principals, and students ensure stronger organizational culture for the enhancement of action research by providing a systematic inquiring framework.

Collegial collaboration is based upon research that has shown that effective schools are marked by productive communication.

Conclusion and Recommendations

A review of studies on effective teaching is an essential step to identifying dispositions of effective teachers. Effectiveness of teachers now includes measurements of how teachers affect learning and program implementation. That is to identify teachers' behaviour that promotes desirable outcomes.

It is accepted that the effectiveness of a teacher is resultant from perceptual state of the teacher at the time of his or her action. But to fully understand the dynamics of teachers' behaviour and its effectiveness, we must direct attention to the nature of his or her personal disposition.

From this study, it is evident that among the ten principles which make up the model of dispositions of effective teachers, the Basic Education Teachers in Nigeria only responded positively to 4 principles. This raises an alarm to teacher educators. It is therefore important for teacher educators to know and understand the dispositions of effective teachers in student teachers and help them discover if they have the dispositions to teach before

churning them out into the teaching profession.

A poor understanding of concepts will lead to poor implementation. An unreflective teacher lacks the power for decision making and choice of actions, the result of which is poor implementation of programme. To ensure effective implementation of the new curriculum, this author calls on government and curriculum developers to intensify, sensitization and orientation efforts to the teachers in their various states. Sensitive should be extended to include orientation on the qualities and expected dispositions of effective teachers. This study should be replicated for the Senior Secondary School curriculum to assess teachers' disposition that will promote successful implementation of the curriculum which marks its first cycle at the end of 2013/2014 academic session.

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