

Teachers' Awareness of and Compliance with Appropriate Strategies in Geography Classrooms in Ibadan

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Abstract

This study assessed teachers' awareness and compliance to the prescribed teaching strategies in the process of implementing the national geography curriculum. Four research questions were raised for the study. The quantitative survey research design was adopted and data were collected with questionnaires from both teachers and students of geography. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. It was observed that field trip and project strategies which seem to cut across almost all the topics in geography classes were reported as seldom used by both teachers and students whereas the lecture method was marked as very often used by both students and teachers. In addition, 76.8% had three periods per week for teaching and learning geography but 71.2% did not have double period. Furthermore, both teachers and the students said the lack of geography room was a very major problem militating against the implementation of the national geography curriculum. Geography teachers are aware of the prescribed teaching strategies but fail to use them as prescribed because of insufficient instructional time, lack of motivation, fund and too much bureaucracy involved in organizing field trip. Teachers should make use of their immediate local community to better their students' experiences as geography teaching and learning cannot be restricted to the four-walls of the classroom. School heads should integrate the parents and the community into school programmes as collaborators and equal partners.

Keywords: Geography curriculum implementation, Students' performance, Teaching strategies

Introduction

Literature has shown that the paradigm in curriculum planning in Nigeria is top-bottom approach. Teachers are not usually key part of curriculum planning in Nigeria and as a result they do not know what a curriculum looks like in terms of its elements until they come in contact with it in the classroom. What this implies is that teachers do not understand the 'spirit' of a curriculum even though its letters can be read. The teacher is expected to enrich the contents and processes of the curriculum for a more robust and meaningful learning to take place with resources of the immediate environment. The same teacher that does not know what the curriculum is until implementation, is expected to use his ingenuity. This problem coupled with lack basic infrastructural facilities necessary for effective curriculum implementation, inadequate specialist teachers, and where available, focus more on theoretical aspect leaving out the practical parts further complicate the predicament of the teacher in a classroom. Secondary school students are losing interest in the study of geography because they perceive the subject to be abstract and this is due to the methods teachers deploy in teaching and learning of the subject.

The process of curriculum implementation involves the interaction of four key elements, that is,

the curriculum planner, the teacher, the learners and the learning environment. In this process, the teacher plays a central role because whatever he or she does in the classroom with a curriculum will determine to a great extent if the set goals of the curriculum will come to fruition. The teacher is expected to lean on his or her professional expertise to make the best out of any situation. Therefore, attempting to find out the level of teachers' awareness and compliance to prescribed strategies in the implementation of the geography curriculum is apt and will give insight into the teacher's knowledge, professional training, competence, initiative, interest and motivation.

The human capital component of a teacher's professional expertise deals with 'what and the how to impact the what'. The failure of a teacher to use the appropriate teaching method has been identified as one of the factors causing poor implementation of the curriculum. Kiboss (2002) singled out the expository approach has the dominant teaching method commonly used for instruction in schools. He views the expository method as inadequate and limited, which tends to negatively affect the learner's views of practical concepts and associated methods. Oduolowu (2007) shared the same view that among other outdated instructional techniques, rote learning, which focuses on the "memorization and regurgitation of facts" is still in use. Ajibola (2008)

pointed out that this form of instruction and learning hampers creativity and does little to foster innate abilities for problem solving and decision-making. It can therefore be inferred that the teacher-centred methods which have been adjudged to be inadequate to promote problem-solving and critical thinking skills are still enjoying great patronage from teachers.

In the early days of geography teaching and learning in Nigeria, what was taught and how it was taught did not consider the child's environments. The teachers were mainly British, the textbooks were the same as those used in British schools, and regional geography was the main focus. This condition was not acceptable to the Nigerian geographers of the time because a Nigerian child in Nigeria should be able to contribute to the development of his community and earn a living. In essence, education should make a Nigerian child functional within his/her own community. According to Obanya (2004) the situation in which a child is growing (present condition) and that which he/she is going to live-in (future condition) should determine the focus of education. What this implies is that education should be meaningful and functional.

As a result of the Federal Government reform in education at the beginning of this millennium and the need to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and critical targets of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS), which can be summarized as: value-orientation, poverty eradication, job creation, wealth generation and using education to empower the people, existing curricula for senior secondary school were reviewed and re-aligned (Federal Ministry of Education, 2007). Consequently, this new curriculum for geography reflects depth, appropriateness and interrelatedness of curricula contents and also included emerging issues like climate change and geographic information system to better prepare secondary school students for these realities. The curriculum in addition, ensured continuity and flow of themes, topic and experiences from senior secondary school one to senior secondary school three using various strategies such as fieldtrip, project, inquiry, discussion, simulation, problem-solving, etc to make learning more utility-oriented, practical and meaningful. In the curriculum, the total experiences to which all learners must be exposed (i.e the content), performance objectives, activities for both teachers and learners, teaching and learning materials and evaluation guide are provided as the minimum standard.

For effective teaching to occur, the teacher would need to use many different methods and techniques at his command and this is to cater for the differences in learning styles. Akusoba & Okafor (2004) carried out a study on the effect of practical work on knowledge retention among secondary school chemistry students. One hundred and fifty (150) students were used for the investigation. Fifty (50) item objective test was administered to collect data. Pretest, posttest (3days after treatment) and delayed post posttest (6months after treatment), control quasi experimental design was adopted for the study. Findings reveal among other things that teaching qualitative analysis through practical work makes for better knowledge retention than teaching the content theoretically. This implies that a topic or content will greatly influence the choice of a teaching method. A particular method or combination of methods may be more suited for a particular topic. In a nutshell, a teacher should always use a method or methods based on the topic for effective and meaningful learning to occur.

Statement of the Problem

Poor performance of students at school certificate examinations has continued to trouble geographers for a long time. This worrisome trend persists and even number of students willing to offer geography as a school subject in Nigeria is dwindling in the wake of declassification of geography as an elective to be chosen from twelve other secondary school subjects consequent upon the policy change in 2013. Research has shown that abstract and theoretical teaching of the subject is one of the reasons for the poor performance in the subject. Past studies have focused on intervention, however, these have not changed students' disposition and performance significantly. The need to assess teachers' awareness and compliance with the prescribed strategies as contained in the curriculum guide is necessary.

This study therefore seeks to find out teachers' awareness and compliance to prescribed strategies in geography classrooms in Ibadan.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided the study. These questions are:

1. Do teachers have the required 3hours period/week allotted to the teaching and learning of geography?
2. How often do teachers comply with the

appropriate teaching methods recommended for use in the national secondary school geography curriculum?

3. What are the problems militating against the implementation of the national curriculum for secondary school geography?

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive survey design. This method is deemed appropriate as it involved the collection of extensive and cross-sectional data for the purpose of describing and interpreting an existing situation under study.

The target population for this study comprised senior secondary school students offering geography and secondary school geography teachers in Ibadan. The simple random sampling technique was used in selecting three out of the five Local Government Areas that constitute Ibadan metropolis. The simple random technique was used in selecting 10 secondary schools in each of the selected LGAs. Students in SS2 were purposively selected for the study because they will have been exposed sufficiently to the curriculum and without the pressure of preparation for external examinations. Geography teachers (at least one teacher per school) were purposively selected in each school because they are the implementers of the geography curriculum in and outside of the classroom. Two hundred students (200) in Ibadan metropolis

constituted the respondents on the one hand and 40 geography teachers within the same territory constituted the other respondents.

The teachers' and the students' questionnaire were divided into sections. Section A was concerned with the demographic data of the respondents while other sections focused on the information required for the study. The information in the questionnaire was drawn from the National Curriculum for Secondary School Geography. A Likert-type four-point rating scales with the numerical values of 4, 3, 2, and 1 or 1, 2, 3, and 4 was used for both the teachers' and the students' questionnaire depending on each item wording. The questionnaires were content and face validate by lecturers in geography education department and also experts in the field of evaluation. The reliability coefficient was .825. Data were collected directly to avoid teachers unnecessary aiding and leading students to respond, though the geography teacher(s) in schools assisted in coordinating and preparing the students for the administration of the students' questionnaire. Data collected were subjected to appropriate quantitative analysis using basic descriptive statistics including frequency count, percentages, mean, and standard deviation.

Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: Do teachers have enough period and double period on the time table for implementing the geography curriculum?

Table 1.1: No. of Teaching Period

Number of periods per week	Frequency (%)	Mean
2	11.3%	2.02
3	76.8%	
4	11.9%	

Table 1.1, above shows that 76.8% of the schools indicated that there are 3 periods per week for teaching and learning geography, while 11.9% and 11.3% indicated that there are 4 and 2 periods respectively per week for teaching and learning geography. Table 1.2, shows that 71.2% of the schools do not have double period for geography on the time table while, 28.8% indicated that there are double period on the time table for geography. In addition, 86.4% of the schools revealed that 40minutes minimum is used per period for geography teaching and learning. 76.8% revealed that they have

Table 1.2: Period Sequencing

Period Sequencing	Frequency (%)	Mean
Double Period	28.8%	0.28
No Double Period	71.2%	

3 periods per week for teaching and learning geography, while 11.3% revealed that they have 2 periods per week for geography on the timetable. However, 71.2% of the respondents said they do not have double period for geography on the timetable. The finding of the study concerning three periods per week differs from the position of Amosun (2016); and Ajibo (2005); that alluded that some if not many of the schools do not have three periods of teaching geography and that very few periods are set aside for the subject in each class. However, the result of the study lent credence to Amosun (2016) that many of

the schools do not have double periods. It is my opinion that the three periods per week going by the minutes per period is not sufficient to effectively and efficiently teach geography in secondary schools. The minimum time expected per week for effective teaching of geography is three hours per week based

on the curriculum specification. This therefore means that the current reality is one hour per week deficient.

Research Question 2: To what extent do geography teachers comply with the appropriate teaching methods as recommended in the curriculum?

Table 2: The Teachers' and Students' mean and percentage rating on Teachers' level of Compliance with the Appropriate Teaching Methods

S/N	TEACHING METHOD	Teachers	Mean	Students	Mean
1	Lecture method	Very Often (47.1%)	3.05	Very Often (76.3%)	3.89
2	Note-giving method	Very Often (66.7%)	3.66	Very Often (67.6%)	3.54
3	Project method	Seldom (41.2%)	2.82	Often (31.5%)	2.76
4	Demonstration method	Very Often (61.1%)	3.44	Very Often (48.3%)	3.36
5	Discovery method	Often (52.9%)	2.76	Often (34.5%)	2.69
6	Individualized method	Often (61.1%)	3.05	Very Often (33.9%)	2.92
7	Discussion method	Very Often (61.1%)	3.44	Very Often (56.1%)	3.36
8	Concept mapping	Often (52.9%)	2.70	Often (34.3%)	2.69
9	Inquiry / problem-solving method	Often (50.0%)	2.94	Seldom (29.9%)	2.79
10	Programmed instruction	Seldom (55.6%)	2.44	Never (35.1%)	2.17
11	Cooperative strategies/learning	Seldom (41.2%)	2.23	Often (33.1%)	2.75
12	Role playing	Often (44.4%)	2.33	Never (34.9%)	2.26
13	Simulation and Games	Seldom (38.9%)	2.11	Never (56.7%)	1.71
14	Field Trip	Never (22.2%)	2.16	Never (38.4%)	1.97
15	Scaffolding	Never (38.9%)	1.88	Never (53.0%)	1.76
16	Textbook methods	Very Often (44.4%)	3.33	Very Often (59.1%)	3.38

Composite mean: 2.76

Key: Very Often (VO) = 4; Often (O) = 3; Seldom (S) = 2; Never (N) = 1

Table 2, presents the mean and percentage scores of the teachers' and the students' extent of teachers' compliance with the appropriate teaching methods recommended for use in the geography curriculum. The average mean of item 14 shows that both the teachers and the students indicated that field trip is seldom used in teaching and learning geography. The composite mean of 2.76 showed that both the teachers and the students indicated that the appropriate teaching methods recommended for use in the geography curriculum were used often. The study revealed that lecture and note-giving methods which are teacher-centred strategies had the highest mean scores and ranked very often used among the methods deployed by teachers. It was also found from the study that fieldtrip which is the most recurring strategy across themes in the secondary school geography curriculum had the lowest mean score and ranked seldom used among the strategies deployed. It

was indicated that none of the teaching strategies was never used. The implication of this, is that geography teachers are aware of the different teaching strategies in geography education. Perhaps teachers do not use field trip outside of the school premises because of limited resources at their disposal. This finding corroborates Amosun (2016) who posited that studies have shown that secondary school teachers are like eternally glued to teacher-centred method which has not been fruitful; Khalil et al (2015); Yakubu (2004); stated that there is absence of field work and field trip as a result of financial problems. This finding concurs with the submission of Ofoha et al (2009); Ololobou (2000); Okpala (1991) that the failure of geography curriculum to prepare Nigerian students for life and proper interaction with the environment is attributed partly to teaching methodologies which are theoretical.

Research Question 3: What are the problems militating against the implementation of the national curriculum for secondary school geography?

Table 3: Teachers' and Students' Mean and Percentage Rating on Problems Militating Against the Implementation of Geography Curriculum in Ibadan

S/N	PROBLEM STATEMENT	Teachers	Mean	Students	Mean
1	Students always crowd together to receive lessons	No Problem (55.6%)	1.66	No Problem (52.7%)	1.80
2	Student's poor background from social studies	Minor Problem (35.3%)	2.11	No Problem (41.9%)	2.00
3	Student's poor numeracy/mathematical skills	Minor Problem (38.9%)	2.55	No Problem (41.9%)	1.55
4	Teacher's poor mathematical background	No Problem (66.7%)	1.55	No Problem (72.7%)	1.55
5	Lack or inadequate teaching materials	Major Problem (38.9%)	2.44	No Problem (33.1%)	2.36
6	Lack of geography room	Very Major Problem (44.4%)	3.00	Very Major Problem (27.7%)	2.59
7	Poor storage facilities	Minor Problem (38.9%)	2.61	Major Problem (32.5%)	2.37
8	Too many tests and assignments	No Problem (52.9%)	1.52	No Problem (49.7%)	1.85
9	Geography teachers are not sponsored for academic conferences	Major Problem (38.9%)	2.55	No Problem (39.5%)	2.28
10	Promotion of teaching staff is not regular	Very Major Problem (33.3%)	2.77	No Problem (32.7%)	2.26
11	There is little or no motivation for teaching staff	Major Problem (33.3%)	2.77	No Problem (33.5%)	2.37
12	Instability in school calendar as a result of strike action	No Problem (35.3%)	2.29	No Problem (40.7%)	2.32
13	Large number of students makes continuous assessment stressful	No Problem (47.1%)	1.76	No Problem (50.6)	1.89
14	No job satisfaction	Minor Problem (35.3%)	2.35	No Problem (45.4%)	2.15
15	Under-funding of education hinders development of geography teachers	Very Major Problem (47.1%)	3.23	No Problem (37.3%)	2.28
16	Forty minutes per period	No problem (29.4%)	2.41	No Problem (62.4%)	1.63
17	Time tabling not properly done/No double period	No Problem (41.2%)	2.17	No Problem (61.4%)	1.74
18	Textbook for teaching staff and students	No Problem (47.1%)	1.70	No Problem (58.3%)	1.83
19	Availability of current National Geography Curriculum	Major Problem (41.2%)	2.41	No Problem (47.9%)	1.98
20	Availability of current geographical journals	Major Problem (47.1%)	2.41	No Problem (37.8%)	2.15
21	Electricity Supply	Minor Problem (52.9%)	2.47	No Problem (49.7%)	2.05
22	Availability of meaningful facilities for teaching and learning	Major Problem (75.0%)	3.00	No Problem (48.5%)	2.01
23	Teachers' knowledge of subject-matter	No Problem (47.1%)	2.05	No Problem (70.1%)	1.56
24	Availability of a well-equipped library	Major Problem (50.0%)	2.56	No Problem (48.8%)	2.03
25	Inadequacy of instructional materials	Major Problem (41.2%)	2.71	No Problem (36.0%)	2.16
26	Availability of an enabling learning (classroom) environment	No Problem (35.3%)	2.29	No Problem (57.0%)	1.89

Composite mean: 2.19

Key: Very Major Problem (VMP) = 4; Major Problem (MAP) = 3; Minor Problem (MIP) = 2; No Problem (NP) = 1.

The data in table 3, show the mean and percentage rating of both the teachers and the students on problems militating against the implementation of national curriculum for secondary school geography. Both the teachers and the students indicated that items 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23 and 26 constituted minor problems to the implementation of the secondary school geography curriculum while

items 6 (lack of geography room) was both agreed by the teachers and the students to constitute major problem. The teachers were of the opinion that students' poor mathematical skills, poor storage facilities, teachers not being sponsored for academic conferences, irregular promotion of teachers, little or no motivation for teachers, under-funding, un-availability of meaningful facilities and inadequacy of instructional materials

were major problems whereas the students opined that these same items were minor problems. The composite mean of shows that both the teachers and the students agreed that these problems are minor. From the findings of this study, it was evidence that lack of geography room, inadequacy of instructional materials, non-availability of meaningful facilities, under-funding ,non-sponsorship of geography teachers for conferences, lack of motivation for teachers all constituted major problems militating against the implementation of the proper implementation of the geography curriculum. No doubt, this problems resulted in other challenges faced in the implementation of the curriculum especially as it concerns teaching methodologies deployed. This finding re-affirms Kolawole (2021) that indices of poor curriculum implementation are lack of infrastructure and material resources, absence of professional development opportunities among other. The study also lent credence to Khalil et al (2015); Ajibo (2005); that problem of finance reflects in the maintenance of geography room, teaching aids, films, field trips, among others. In addition, the study revealed that teachers' poor mathematical background constitute a minor problem to the implementation of secondary school geography curriculum. This result is in tandem with Amosun (2016); who opined that teachers avoid teaching map reading aspect of geography because it requires abstract thinking and mathematical skills.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should be engaged in in-service training programmes like workshops and seminars to equip them with the current practices in teaching especially on the use of technology and its application.
2. The geography teacher should give more project and practical assessment to students so as to be able to assess better and also assist in improvising materials needed for teaching and learning.

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