



Primary School Teachers' Perception and Extent of Usage of Learner-Centered Methods in Asaba Metropolis, Nigeria

Ayo-Vaughan, Adewunmi. F. Ph.D

oluwanikanlomola@gmail.com

Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Federal College of Education
(Technical) Asaba

Abstract

The changing needs of today's society require that education provided should promote new forms of knowledge, skills and values that will benefit both the present and future generations. To attain this, the use of learner-centered methods has been found to be more relevant than teacher-centered methods. However, majority of teachers are still adjusting to its use. This study was thus carried out to examine primary school teachers' perception of learner-centered methods and extent of usage of these methods. The study employed the survey research design. The population comprised public primary school teachers at the middle basic level in Asaba metropolis. Simple random sampling and comprehensive sampling techniques were used in the study. Two research questions guided the study. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire tagged 'Teachers' Usage of Learner-Centered Methods Questionnaire' (TULCMQ). The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha analysis and a reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. The study found that primary school teachers have a positive perception of learner-centered methods. Also, primary school teachers use to a very high extent various learner-centered methods. In view of these findings, the study recommended that primary school teachers should keep up their positive perception of learner-centered methods. In addition, the state education supervisory agencies should step up supervisory activities so that the standard upheld by the teachers will not drop.

Keywords: Learner-centered methods, Primary School, Teachers, Teaching methods

Introduction

The primary purpose of teaching at any level of education is to transmit knowledge that will bring about fundamental, intellectual and attitudinal transformation in the learner. With the advent of Western Education, the duty of transforming the learner through acquisition of

appropriate knowledge has gone beyond the family institution to include schools. It has thus become the responsibility of teachers to apply appropriate teaching methods that best suit stated specific objectives in their subject areas in order to facilitate the desired transformation in the learner. For instance, Waghid (as cited in Ayo-



Vaughan and Amosun, 2016) submitted that the virtues of responsible citizenship can best be learned in schools. Enu and Esu (2011) also added that schools are best suited to teach appropriate knowledge.

A teacher thus has the duty to ensure that the right methodologies are used to teach the appropriate knowledge in order to achieve the desired objective. However, studies such as Carola, Niklas, Hans-Olof and Eva (2012) and Ayo-Vaughan (2016) have shown that majority of teachers still stick to the traditional lecture and teacher-centered methods in most subject areas which are not very helpful in transmitting knowledge, attitudes and values that facilitate sustainable development. The above development, Hightower (2010) maintained, has in recent times questioned the effectiveness of teaching methods on students' learning in relation to creating a sustainably developed environment. Howbeit, Carola, Niklas, Hans-Olof and Eva (2012) also noted in their study that teacher educators especially those in the sciences are beginning to make conscious efforts to use methodologies that enhance teaching for sustainable development especially learner-centered methods.

By way of description, a learner-centered method according to Canon (2015) depicts a learning environment that has the learner's responsibility and activity at its heart. The flow of teaching moves from the learner to the teacher and the teacher serves more as a facilitator of learning than a reserve of knowledge. This is in contrast to the emphasis on teacher control and the

coverage of academic content found in much conventional teaching. Additionally, McCombs and Whistler as cited in Ahmed (2013) submitted that in a learner-centered classroom, learners find the learning process more meaningful when topics are relevant to their lives, needs, and interests, and when they are actively engaged in creating, understanding, and connecting to knowledge. Barr and Tagg as cited in Mohammad (2012) and McCombs and Whistler as cited in Ahmed (2013) posited that teachers who use learner-centered methods must include the learners in their decisions about how and what they learn and how that learning is assessed, and they must also respect and accommodate individual differences in learners' backgrounds, interests, abilities, and experiences. In consonance, Weimer (2012) maintained that in the use of learner-centered methods, the role of the teacher is to encourage learners to do more discovery learning and to learn from each other. The teacher focuses on constructing authentic, real-life tasks that motivate learner involvement and participation.

Therefore, since learner-centered methods are of immense benefits and it seems majority of teachers are yet to make good use of it, Abdu-Raheem (2015) submitted that teachers are significantly related in their perception of methods that could effectively enhance learning. The list of these methods as presented by Abdu-Raheem, showed that they were majorly learner-centered methods.



Similarly, despite the positive perception of teachers on learner-centered methods, Edokpolor (2018) submitted that learner-centered methods are underutilized in teaching. Though Edokpolor's study focused on business studies at the junior secondary school level of education, it is in consonance with Ubulom and Ogwunte (2017) who found that teacher-centered method was ineffective when compared to learner-centered method and recommended that learner-centered method be made compulsory in teaching.

As regards extent of usage of learner-centered methods, UNESCO (2008) found out that classroom teachings were basically anti-dialogue and designed to stifle the potential of promoting the learners to develop a critical perspective towards what they were taught. In addition, Samba, Achor and Ogbeba (2010) found that though teachers are aware of learner-centered methods, only few of these methods were effectively used to teach. Recently, the study of Otukile-Mongwaketse (2018) submitted that teachers delivery of instruction were mostly teacher centered, and this makes some learners benefit minimally from the teaching and learning process especially learners who have learning deficiencies. For sustainable development to be achieved through education therefore, the role of teacher educators cannot be over-looked. Edozie (2016) noted that teachers are the major stakeholders when it comes to curriculum implementation. However, most of the

studies carried out by previous researchers have focused on the use of learner-centered methods at the secondary and tertiary levels of education leaving out the primary level which is the foundation for the other levels. It is the primary school teacher that builds the academic foundation of the learner upon which the secondary and tertiary teachers develop the learner's prospects in future.

The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) also pointed out that primary education is that foundational education given to children between ages 5-11. The objectives for teaching at this level includes laying a sound foundation for scientific and effective thinking, participation and contribution to the society and providing basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality among others also suggests that if a child is not able to get it right at the primary education stage, there could arise fundamental issues in the child's holistic growth which could in turn affect how sustainably such a child can contribute to the development of the society in future. Despite findings in literature reviewed that have shown that the duty of transmitting appropriate knowledge which would facilitate sustainable development has been transferred to schools and that teachers serve as the major medium for achieving this through the use of innovative methodologies such as learner-centered methods, majority of teachers are just recently adjusting to the use of



learner-centered methods in the classroom (Edokpolor, 2018). Teacher-centered methods seem to be the most prevalent even at the primary school level. If this trend continues, by implication, the Nigerian child would thus lack the benefits that stem from the use of learner-centered methods to facilitate holistic transformation that would propel sustainable development in the society. Many studies have been carried out on learner-centered methods. However, the focus of these studies have been on the secondary and tertiary levels of education thus overlooking the primary level that serves as the foundation for all. Consequent on the above, this study was set out to examine primary school teachers' perception and extent of usage of learner-centered methods as innovative methodologies for enhancing sustainable development in Asaba metropolis, Delta State.

Research Questions

1. What is the primary school teachers' perception of the concept of learner-centered methods?
2. To what extent do primary school teachers use the various learner-centered methods in classroom teaching in Asaba metropolis?

Methodology

The study employed the survey research design and focused on Asaba metropolitan area of Delta State as the area of study. The population of the study comprised primary school teachers at the middle basic level (Basic 4-6) in the 21 public primary schools in Asaba metropolis. Simple

random sampling technique was used to select six out of the 21 public primary schools in Asaba Metropolis while comprehensive sampling technique was used to select all the 109 teachers at the middle basic level in the six schools randomly selected since the number was manageable.

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: Teachers' Usage of Learner-Centered Methods Questionnaire (TULCMQ). The instrument consisted of Sections A - C. Section A sought for information on personal data of respondents while Section B contained items meant to elicit responses on the teachers' perception of learners-centeredness. Section C elicited responses on the extent to which the teachers' used the various learners-centered methods in the course of teaching as innovative strategies enhancing sustainable development. The items were rated on a 4-point Likert type scale option of Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) for items in section B and a 4-point modified Likert scale option of Very High Extent (VHE); High Extent (HE); Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) for section C.

The instrument was given to experts in the field of social science education who examined its face and content validity. Corrections made were effected in the final draft of the instrument before administration. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach method and the alpha value of .87 was



obtained. This high reliability coefficient indicates that the instrument is reliable. The researcher administered 109 copies of the questionnaire within a period of three days and collection of completed copies was done on the spot on each of these days. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, mean, and standard deviation. For the research questions, a boundary limit of numbers was used as follows:

Very high extent/Strongly Agree	4	3.50–4.00
High extent/Agree	3	2.50–3.49
Low extent/Disagree	2	1.50–2.49
Very low extent/Strongly Disagree	1	1.00–1.49

Results

Research Question 1: What is the primary school teachers' perception of the concept of learner-centered methods?

Table 1: Teachers' Perception of Learner-Centered Methods

S/NO	STATEMENTS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Learner-centered method implies an effective teaching approach that helps in making pupils' learn actively.	77	30	0	2	3.67	0.34	Agree
2.	Learner-centered method encourages and facilitates pupils' shared decision-making in classroom teaching.	39	70	0	0	3.36	0.26	Agree
3.	Learner-centered method enables pupils to construct their knowledge rather than passively receiving it.	81	25	0	3	3.69	0.25	Agree
4.	Learner-centered method provides a structure of not being overly directive in the course of teaching.	55	52	2	0	3.50	0.33	Agree
5.	Learner-centered method gives pupils increasing responsibility in the learning process.	70	38	0	1	3.62	0.29	Agree
6.	Learner-centered method provide questions and tasks that stimulate pupils' thinking beyond rote memorization	73	35	0	1	3.65	0.28	Agree
Weighted Average Mean						3.58		

Table 1 shows that primary school teachers examined in this study have a positive perception on learner-centered method as responses to statements constructed exceeded the mean score average of 2.50. Furthermore, the weighted average mean score of 3.58 shows that respondents were very close in their perception on the concept of learner-centered methods.

Research Question 2: To what extent do primary school teachers use the various learners-centered methods in classroom teaching?

**Table 2:** Extent of Teacher's Usage of Learners-Centered Methods

S/NO	STATEMENTS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	SD	Decision
7.	Usage of case studies in class to enhance mild intellectual discussions.	77	30	1	1	3.68	0.29	VHE
8.	Usage of project method to encourage creativity among the pupils.	39	68	1	1	3.33	0.29	VHE
9.	Usage of role play method to make learning concrete and true to life.	73	35	1	0	3.66	0.23	VHE
10.	Usage of guided instruction method to enable pupils discover fact on their own.	73	35	1	1	3.67	0.23	VHE
11.	Usage of problem-solving method to stimulate the interest in pupils for independent learning	77	30	1	1	3.68	0.29	VHE
12.	Usage of a combination of learner-centered methods to prepare activities that pupils carry out in classroom teaching	37	71	1	0	3.33	0.25	VHE
13.	Usage of learner-centered methods but not with the primary intent to connect it with the principles of sustainable development.	70	38	0	1	3.62	0.29	VHE
14.	Usage of learner-centered methods basically because it creates a collaborative effort between the teacher and pupils.	80	28	0	1	3.72	0.26	VHE
Weighted Average Mean						3.58		

*VHE (Very High Extent)

Table 2 shows that primary school teachers examined in this study, use to a very high extent various learner-centered methods as responses to all statements constructed exceeded the mean score average of 2.50. Furthermore, the weighted average mean of 3.58 shows that respondents were very close in their responses.

Discussion

This study answered two research questions related to primary school

teachers' perception of and extent of usage of learner-centered methods. The study found that primary school teachers in Asaba metropolis have a positive perception of learner-centered methods of teaching. This finding is in line with that of Abdu-Raheem (2015) who submitted that teachers are significantly related in their perception of methods that could effectively enhance learning and that these methods were chiefly learner-centered methods. The finding also aligns with



Edokpolor (2018) who also maintained that teachers have a positive perception of learner-centered methods though it was still largely underutilized in teaching.

In addition, this study found that primary school teachers in Asaba metropolis use to a very high extent various learner-centered methods basically to create a collaborative effort between the teacher and pupils in the teaching-learning process. This finding negates earlier findings of Samba, Achor and Ogbeba (2010) who found that though teachers are aware of learner-centered methods, only few of these methods were effectively used to teach and Otukile-Mongwaketse (2018) who also reported that teachers delivery of instruction were mostly teacher centered. The reason for this disparity may not be unconnected from the fact that these earlier studies did not cover the primary school level in their scope of study. Thus while it is easy to use teacher-centered methods to teach at the secondary and tertiary levels because the learners at these levels are more matured and independent, it is quite difficult to do so at the primary level.

Conclusion

From this study, it can be concluded that primary school teachers in Asaba metropolis have a positive perception of learner-centered methods of teaching and the extent of usage of learner-centered methods is very high. This is indeed a good development for education in the metropolis.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that primary school teachers should be encouraged to keep up their positive perception of learner-centered methods. This could be achieved by improved teacher welfare packages and prompt promotion among others. In addition, the state education supervisory bodies should keep up with their supervisory duties so that the standard of using learner-centered methods by primary school teachers will not drop.

References

- Abdu-Raheem, B.O. (2015). Teachers' perception of the effectiveness of methods of teaching social studies in Ekiti State, Nigeria. *World Journal of Education*, 5(2), 33-39. doi: 10.5430/wje.v5n2p33
- Ahmed, K.A. (2013). Teacher-Centered versus learner-centered teaching style. *The Journal of Global Business Management* 9(1), 22-34.
- Ayo-Vaughan, A.F. (2016). Effects of case study and puzzle-based learning on students' achievement, attitude and civic competence in social studies and civic education (Unpublished doctoral thesis), University of Ibadan, Nigeria.
- Ayo-Vaughan, A.F. & Amosun, P. A. (2016). Effects of two modes of active learning strategies on school age children's civic competence in leadership value concepts in Social Studies and Civic Education. *Journal of*



- Educational and Social Research 6(2), 213-223.
- Canon, R. (2015). Guide to support the implementation of the learning and teaching plan year 2017. Australia: The University of Adelaide
- Carola, B., Niklas, G., Hans-Olof, H., and Eva, B. (2012). The barriers encountered by teachers implementing education for sustainable development: discipline bound differences and teaching traditions. *Research in Science and Technological Education*, 30(2), 185-207. doi: [org/10.1080/02635143.2012.699891](http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02635143.2012.699891)
- Edokpolor, J. E. (2018). The use of students-centered methods in the teaching of business studies in junior secondary schools. *Journal of Education in Developing Areas (JEDA)*, 26(1), 23-31.
- Edozie, G.C. (2016). *Fundamentals of curriculum studies* (2nd ed. Revised). Benin City: Ambik Press Ltd.
- FRN (2013). *National policy on education* (6th ed.). Lagos: NERDC
- Hightower, A.M. (2010). Improving student learning by supporting quality teaching: key issues, effective strategies. *Editorial Projects in Education*. Retrieved from http://www.edweek.org/med/aperc_qualityteaching_12.11.pdf
- Matin, .M. (2012). Interactive computer-centered instructions for science and engineering education. *Creative Education* 3(3), 375-379. doi: [10.4236/ce.2012.33059](https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2012.33059).
- Otukile-Mongwaketse, M. (2018). Teacher centered dominated approaches: their implications for today's inclusive classrooms. *International Journal of Psychology and Counselling*, 10(2), 11-21. doi: [10.5897/IJPC2016.0393](https://doi.org/10.5897/IJPC2016.0393)
- Samba, R.M.O., Achor, E.E., & Ogbaba, J.A. (2010). Teachers' awareness and utilization of innovative teaching strategies in secondary school science in Benue state. *Nigeria Educational Research*, 1(2), 32-38. Retrieved from <http://www.interestjournals.org/ER>
- Tebabal, A. & Kahssay, G. (2011). The effects of student-centered approach in improving students' graphical interpretation skills and conceptual understanding of kinematical motion. *Latin America Journal of Physics Education*, 5(2), 374-381.
- Ubulom, W.J & Ogwunte, P.C. (2017). Evaluation of teacher-centered and learner-centered methods for instructional delivery of senior secondary schools financial accounting in Rivers State. *International Journal of Innovative Finance and Economics Research*, 5(3), 81-88. Retrieved from <http://www.seahipaj.org>
- UNESCO- Working Document (2008). Voluntary contributions by speakers on inclusive education. Retrieved from http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Policy_Dialogue/48th_ICE
- Weimer, M. (2012). Five characteristics of learner-centered teaching. Retrieved from <http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/effective-teaching-strategies/five-characteristics-of-learner-centered-teaching/>