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INFLUENCE OF CURRICULUM SUPPORT OFFICER ON THE USE OF LEARNER-CENTERED PEDAGOGY AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AMONG PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN AWKA-SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study was titled "Influence of Curriculum Support Officer on the Learner-Centered Pedagogies and Instructional Materials among Pre-Primary and Primary school Teachers in Awka South Local Government Area". The objectives were to determine the influence of curriculum support officer on use of learner-centered pedagogies and utilization of instructional materials among pre-primary and primary school teachers. The research questions were in line with the objectives. Descriptive survey design was used. The population was 710 with 248 sample size. A multistage sampling technique was used to select the respondents. Twenty-three self-design structured-items questionnaire was used. Reliability of the instrument was ascertained through a pilot study. This was done through Cronbach's Apha to determine the internal consistency and the result got was 0.87 which implies the instrument was reliable. Mean was the statistical tool for data analysis. Findings were that inadequate funding, qualified curriculum support officers were inadequate, inadequate qualified teachers and inadequate office accommodations for curriculum support officers to promote their services in training teachers on the provision and utilization of instructional materials among teachers were found. It was recommended that head teachers in collaboration with government through Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBEB) to equip curriculum support officer with funds to enhance their productivity in

training pre-primary and primary school teachers in the area of learner-centered pedagogies and instructional materials in Awka Local Government.

Keywords: Influence, Curriculum Support Officer, Learner-Centered Pedagogies and Instructional Materials.

Introduction

Pre-primary and primary school education is at the base of educational system and therefore constitutes the foundation or bedrock of the nation's educational and economic development. The need for enhancing training needs of Pre-primary and primary school teachers through curriculum support officer cannot therefore be under-estimated. According to Isichei (1997) in Edith (2014), a teacher who is not constantly expanding and deepening his knowledge cannot do an adequate job. Hence, Edith (2014) adds that the need for enhancing training of teachers so as to encourage total devotion to continuous self-improvement on the job, providing further knowledge, skills and attitudes to the teacher and improving his/her performance on the job thereby promoting quality in education.

Curriculum Support Officer (CSO) is an individual who render advice and/or train teachers to improve quality teaching and learning process in the school. He/she does so by visiting and working in collaboration with schools. The name may vary depending on the country or school. It could also be "School Improvement Team" (SIT), or "Teacher Development Team" (TDT). According to Southern River College (2019), the Curriculum Support Officer (CSO) will be responsible for providing high level curriculum administrative support to the principal, deputy principals and teaching staff, including managing student and teacher timetables, grids, class structures and adjustments, as well as managing a range of curriculum related databases. He further states that the curriculum support officer will also coordinate examination rosters, venues and supervisors, as well as coordinate student teacher/mentoring practicums across the school and coordinate and implement procedures for parent-teacher online and parent-teacher interview days.

To The Springfield Anglican College (2019), the Curriculum Support Officer contributes to the College's aims and philosophy of supporting and assisting teaching staff in the delivery of curriculum which is underpinned by clear expectations about high quality learning outcomes and standards. Springfield Anglican College (2019) stresses that the CSO nurtures self-esteem, encourages self-reflection and develops compassion, respect, and tolerance in students so that they may build their lives in a school environment that values education within a sustaining and life giving community.

Ashok (2021) opines that educators emphasize that most of the teaching in early childhood classrooms should be interactive, which is what you will find in the best preschool and that the interactive

method of teaching encourages children to be active in their learning process. According to Ashok (2021), there are four ways teachers can create an interactive learning environment which include hands-on demonstrations and activities, student-to-student interactions, student-teacher interactions and use of audiovisuals. Ideally and more specifically, learner-centered pedagogy is the recommended pedagogy in teaching pre-primary and primary school pupils. it is learner-centered pedagogy, also known as child-centered learning, is a learning that mainly focuses on the needs and interests of the learners rather than those of other involved parties such as administrators and teachers in the education system (Al-Zu'be, 2013).

In the opinion of Mligo, Mitchell and Bell (2016), the teacher is placed to facilitate the learning, and to focus on the needs, interests, and learning styles of the pupils and that previous studies indicate that the lack of pedagogical skills of teachers who work with young children is closely associated with children's delay in achievement of developmental goals and milestones and causes serious disadvantage in their future work and careers (Herbert, 2004 in Mligo, Mitchell, & Bell, 2016). Teachers are the ones who interpret the goals and aims of the pre-school education curriculum in the classroom context (philosophy to practice) and as such need support especially in the area of pedagogies and instructional materials.

In the classroom situation, instructional materials are objects used to ease effective teaching. They aid quality teaching and learning in school at all levels including pre-primary and primary. Instructional materials according to Oke (2016) as quoted by Afoma and Omotuyole (2013) is a tangible or physical object which provides rigorous, visual or both to the five senses during teaching and learning. Hence, Kamwitha, Ibrahim and Andrew (2020) opined that instructional materials comprise all forms of information carriers that can be used to stimulate and boost effective teaching and learning accomplishments. Instructional inputs such as textbooks among many others are part of a holistic effort that leads to better learning (World Bank, 2019).

More so, high quality education is realized when Early Childhood Care and Education is provided with school instructional resources particularly with instructional materials (OECD, 2012 in Kamwitha, Ibrahim, & Andrew, 2020). Provision of instructional materials to pre-primary and primary classroom by teachers is an important activity that should be done continually (Eckline, 2017). Therefore, instructional materials in pre-primary and primary school enables learners to develop imagination, discovery, creative and manipulative skills in their learning process.

Therefore, the training teachers' received from curriculum support officers through workshops and seminars play significant role in teaching and learning process as it influences the use of pedagogies and instructional materials in teaching. These training affect the way and how teachers' teach pre-primary and

primary school pupils. Trained teachers have a positive relationship with the learners and they also socialize well with learners as they use the appropriate pedagogies and instructional materials. Based on the above background, this study aimed at investigating the Influence of Curriculum Support Officer on the Use of Learner-Centered Pedagogy and Instructional Materials among Pre-Primary and Primary school Teachers in Awka-South Local Government.

Statement of the Problem

Teaching pre-primary and primary pupils is practical in nature. Teachers need to use appropriate pedagogies and provide adequate materials from the local environment to teach pre-primary and pupils as they learn best by active participation and manipulation. In so doing, the pupils understand and appreciate their environment through observation, listening, exploration, inquiry, discovering, experimentation and manipulation of the nature and/or objects. It is therefore unfortunate that these curriculum support officers are in state dilemma and frustration to effectively perform as expected. This could be as a result of lack of transport facilities and access good roads, inadequate funds to organize and conduct seminars, inadequate support staff in offices, inadequate office equipment and poor means of communication. It is also observed that there is consistent poor academic performance pre-primary and primary schools. However, this can only be done through training and re-training of the day caregivers and teachers in pre-primary and primary centres/schools to enhance quality teaching. This really demands for curriculum support officers to train and re-train pre-primary and primary school teachers in the area of learner-centered pedagogies and instructional materials to enhance quality teaching in Awka South, Anambra State.

Research Questions

For this purpose of this, the following questions were raised:

1. What is the influence of Curriculum Support Officers on the Use of Learner-Centered Pedagogy among Pre-Primary and Primary school Teachers in Awka-South Local Government?
2. What is the influence of Curriculum Support Officers on the Use of Instructional Materials among Pre-Primary and Primary school Teachers in Awka-South Local Government?

Research Method

Descriptive survey was used. According to Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBEB, 2020), the population of public pre-primary and primary schools in Awka South of Anambra State was 710. It comprises of 45 head teachers and 665 day caregivers/teachers in Anambra State. The sample was 248 which were selected through a multistage sampling technique. However, Research Advisors' Sample Size Table (2006) was used to determine the sample size. Instrument used for data

collection was self-designed structured items questionnaire. The instrument titled "Influence of Curriculum Support Officer on the Use of Learner-Centered Pedagogy and Instructional Materials among Pre-Primary and Primary school Teachers". It comprises of 23 structured items. Section "A" of the questionnaire seeks for respondents' demographic data while section "B" was item statements to answer the research questions. More so, the items were structured on a four point likert scale (that is, Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed). Context validity of the instrument was ascertained. In order to ascertain reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted on 30 members of the population from five (5) Pre-Primary and Primary schools in Anambra State. The instrument was administered on 5 head teachers and 25 teachers with the aim to confirm internal consistency. This was done using Cronbach's Apha and 0.87 r value was obtained which implies the instrument was reliable. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentage as well as mean. Frequency counts and simple percentages were used to analyze demographic data of the respondents while mean was used to answer the research questions.

Presentation of Results

The researcher used 2.5 as the mean otherwise known as decision mean since the instrument were four structured point likert scale to take decision on whether to accept or reject the research question after comparing it with the cumulative mean. Therefore, a mean score of 2.5 and above indicate positive response to the research question and accepted while a mean score below 2.5 indicate negative answer to the research question and rejected. However, the 248 instrument distributed, 245 were correctly filled and returned.

Research Question One: What is the influence of curriculum support officers on the use of learner-center pedagogy among pre-primary and primary school teachers in Awka-South Local Government?

Table 1: Opinion of Respondents on the Influence of Curriculum Support Officer on the Use of Learner-Center Pedagogy among Pre-Primary and Primary school Teachers in Awka-South Local Government

S/N	Item Statements	N	Mean	Decision
1	Curriculum support officers influenced teachers' use of pedagogies positively.	245	3.9	Agreed
2	There are adequate curriculum support officers to guide teachers on the use of pedagogies.	245	1.7	Disagreed
3	There is adequate fund for curriculum support officers to performance as expected in the school.	245	1.1	Disagreed
4	Curriculum support officers regularly trained and re-trained day caregivers/teachers through workshops and seminars on pedagogies.	245	2.1	Disagreed
5	There are adequate facilities curriculum support officers to enable curriculum support officers function effectively.	245	1.8	Disagreed

6	There are good access roads to facilitate movement of the curriculum support officer to centres/schools to train teachers on pedagogies.	245	3.1	Agreed
7	Adequate transport facilities enhanced the performance of curriculum support officers in the school.	245	3.6	Agreed
8	Appropriate use of pedagogies promotes positive academic performance among pupils.	245	3.8	Agreed
9	There are effective transport facilities to boost the services of curriculum support officers in the school.	245	1.5	Disagreed
10	Effective communication influences job performance of curriculum support officers in the school.	245	3.4	Agreed

Research question 1 of table 1 sought the opinion of respondents on the influence of curriculum support officer on the use of learner-center pedagogy among pre-primary and primary school teachers in Awka-South Local Government. The results indicated that item 1, 6, 7, 8 and 10 were positively responded to (accepted) by the respondents with mean score 3.9, 3.1, 3.6, 3.8 and 3.4 while item 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9 were rejected or disagreed with mean score of 1.7, 1.1, 2.1, 1.8 and 1.5.

Research Question Two: What is the influence of curriculum support officer on the use of instructional materials among pre-primary and primary school teachers in Awka-South Local Government?

Table 2: Opinion of Respondents on the Influence of Curriculum Support Officer on the Use of Instructional Materials among Pre-Primary and Primary school Teachers in Awka-South Local Government

S/N	Item Statements	N	Mean	Decision
1	Training through curriculum support officers influenced teachers' job performance on the use of instructional materials.	245	3.7	Agreed
2	Instructional materials enhance quality teaching and learning process.	245	3.9	Agreed
3	Curriculum support officers positively influence adequate provision of improvised instructional materials in the school.	245	3.2	Agreed
4	There are security threats which affect the services of curriculum support officers.	245	2.6	Agreed
5	Curriculum support officers positively influence the utilization of instructional materials among teachers.	245	3.8	Agreed
6	There are adequate qualified curriculum support officers to guide teachers on use of instructional materials in the school.	245	1.5	Disagreed
7	Inadequate funds negatively affect provision of instructional materials.	245	3.9	Agreed
8	There are adequate qualified teachers who can receive training from curriculum support officers on utilization of instructional materials in the school.	245	1.7	Disagreed
9	Unsecured school environment could affect the services of curriculum support officers in the school.	245	3.7	Agreed
10	There are office accommodations for curriculum support officers so as to promote their services in training teachers on the provision and utilization of instructional materials among teachers.	245	2.3	Disagreed

Research question 1 of table 1 sought the opinion of respondents on the influence of curriculum support officer on the use of instructional materials among pre-primary and primary school teachers in Awka-South Local Government. The results indicated that item 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and were accepted by the respondents with mean of 3.7, 3.9, 3.2, 2.6, 3.8, 3.9 and 3.7. On the other hand, item 6, 8 and 10 were rejected. The mean scores for the rejected items were 1.5, 1.7 and 2.3.

Summary of the Findings

The following were major findings of this study:

1. The study revealed that there is inadequate fund for curriculum support officers to performance as expected in the school, inadequate training for pre-primary and primary teachers by curriculum support officers via workshops and seminars on pedagogies coupled with ineffective transport facilities to boost the services of curriculum support officers in the school.
2. The study also revealed that qualified curriculum support officers are inadequate, inadequate qualified teachers to be trained as well as inadequate office accommodations for curriculum support officers to promote their services in training teachers on the provision and utilization of instructional materials among pre-primary and primary school teachers in Awka South of Anmabra State.

Discussion of the Findings

The study revealed that there is inadequate fund for curriculum support officers to performance as expected in the school, there is inadequate training for pre-primary and primary teachers by curriculum support officers via workshops and seminars on pedagogies coupled with ineffective transport facilities to boost the services of curriculum support officers in the school. In conformity with the above, Omotayo (2007) found that improvement of instructions is better enhanced when the government and heads of schools assist teachers to grow intellectually and also encouraging initiatives. An observation by Edith(2014) shown that in-service education is either non-existent, and where it existed, it has been provided as short term crash courses only and the activities are often underfunded; the duration of training was too short, and the quality problematic and that all these problems culminated in poor instructional delivery as teachers who should be reservoirs of knowledge are not given priority by organizing programmes that could enrich their knowledge, skill, initiatives and improved instructional delivery. Mligo, Mitchell and Bell (2016) found that quality pre-school education in the literature indicates the importance of teaching by using Learner-Centered Pedagogy.

The study also revealed that there are inadequate qualified curriculum support officers to guide teachers on use of instructional materials in the school, inadequate qualified teachers who can receive training from curriculum support

officers on utilization of instructional materials in the school as well as inadequate office accommodations for curriculum support officers so as to promote their services in training teachers on the provision and utilization of instructional materials among teachers affect curriculum support officers from performing in pre-primary and primary schools Awka South of Anambra State. In a similar study, an earlier study by Idowu (1985), Obameata (1995) and Onocha (1985) found that quality education is often linked with such indicators as quality teachers, improved curriculum, good delivery, quality infrastructure, facilities, conducive learning environment, provision of adequate learning materials, training and re-training of teachers, improved teacher-pupil ratio, parental involvement, increased and improved monitoring and superior of learning and quality output among others.

Eckline (2017) found that instructional materials were not effectively used among pre-primary school teachers. Instructional materials according to Philippines; Education for All (2015) in Kamwitha, A. M., Ibrahim, K. & Andrew, R. (2020) help improve access and educational efficiency since students are less likely to have low participation in schools that provide space and resource for them. More recently, a study by Kamwitha, Ibrahim and Andrew (2020) established that they are not adequate pre-primary and primary schools. Also, the World Bank (2019) observed that the amount of money a country spends on learning materials indicates its commitment to providing a quality education for all.

Conclusion

Based on the finding, it was concluded that there was inadequate fund for curriculum support officers to performance as expected in the school, there is inadequate training for pre-primary and primary teachers by curriculum support officers via workshops and seminars on pedagogies coupled with ineffective transport facilities to boost the services of curriculum support officers in the schools. Also, there was inadequate qualified curriculum support officers to guide teachers on use of instructional materials in the school, inadequate qualified teachers who can receive training from curriculum support officers on utilization of instructional materials in the school as well as inadequate office accommodations for curriculum support officers so as to promote their services in training teachers on the provision and utilization of instructional materials among teachers affect curriculum support officers from performing in pre-primary and primary schools Awka South of Anambra State.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were therefore made:

1. Head teachers diversify sources of funds through collaboration with parents via School-Based Management Committee (SBMC) and investing on school farm and handicrafts to financially support

curriculum support officers in training and re-training pre-primary and primary school teachers on use of pedagogies in Awka South of Anambra State.

2. Also, Head teachers diversify sources of funds through collaboration with parents via School-Based Management Committee (SBMC) should provide community-based teachers and provide adequate office accommodations to curriculum support officers in order to enhance quality service delivery among pre-primary and primary schools in Awka South of Anambra State.

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