
An Assessment of Teachers Attitude and Frequent Use of Improvised Instructional Materials on Students' Performance in Social Studies

By

EKONG, Xavier Moses, *Ph.D*
Department of Educational Technology and Library Science
University of Uyo, Uyo

ASBTRACT

The study focused on assessing the frequency use of improvised instructional materials and teachers' attitude toward students' performance in social studies. For the purpose of this study, survey and quasi-experimental designs were used. The study was carried out in the Central Senatorial District of Cross Rivers State comprising of six local government area namely: Abi, Boki, Etung, Ikom, Obubra and Yakurr. The population of the study consisted of all the social studies teachers and students in the 89 secondary schools (JSS II) in the Central Senatorial District of Cross River State. The population of teachers was estimated at 89 representing 53 males and 36 female ones. The sample consisted of 12 social studies teachers and 600 students offering social studies in JSS II students from selected schools. The two instruments used for the study was questionnaire and performance test. The face, content and construct validation of the two researcher-designed instruments were ascertained by the supervisor. To ensure the reliability of the research-designed instruments, the researcher conducted a pilot study using 10 teachers and 50 junior secondary school II students. Independent t-test analysis and descriptive statistics were used to test for the two hypothesis. The study therefore concluded that there is significant relationship between teachers' use, and teachers' attitude towards the use of improvised instructional materials and students' performance in social studies. The study recommended that teachers should ensure regular attendance of conferences, workshops and exhibitions on improvisation, in order to promote a favorable attitude towards the use of improvised materials in schools and improve performance of students.

KEYWORDS: Frequency Use, Improvised Instructional Materials, Teachers' Attitude, Students' Performance, Social Studies

Introduction

In the teaching and learning of social studies, and the improvement of students' performance, there is need for a successful integration of instructional process. If the teacher lacks basic instructional materials, the effectiveness of his lesson delivery will be limited (Romiszowski, 1988). This obviously, is one of the greatest challenges of the contemporary Nigerian teacher and further represents a major paradigm shift, in terms of emphasis, from teacher-centered to learner-centered learning. Ibe-Bassey (1994) maintained that the use of improvised instructional materials could facilitate more learning because such materials have cultural relevance to the learners. Thus, improvisation demands from teachers some degree of resourcefulness, utilization prowess and the resolve to face the challenge of effective teaching with optimism. Gbamanja (1997) argued that resourcefulness of the teacher means that he (the teacher) knows "where" to get "what" he wants to enrich his teaching.

The idea of improvisation is an adoption and adaptation of innovation in Nigerian schools (Dike, 1989). It should be encouraged at all levels of teacher education because, as Eshiet (1996) noted improvisation sustains and encourages creativity and innovativeness among improvisers. It is however, instructive to note that the absence of instructional materials during instruction has negative consequences on both the teacher and the learner. The teacher is put into several hours of verbalization and sermonization characteristics of the traditional “talk-and-chalk” method. On the part of the students, the lesson is boring, less interesting and abstract, and this negatively affect their academic performance. According to Ajayi (1999) and Yoloye (2004), inadequate and poor use of instructional materials has been responsible for students’ poor performance in school subjects (including social studies) in secondary schools. This study is therefore, provoked to examine the influence of teachers’ utilization of improvised instructional materials on students’ performance in social studies in junior secondary schools in Central Senatorial District of Cross River State.

Statement of the Problem

The spiraling cost of funding education today has created lots of problems in the educational systems, and this is further compounded by poor budgetary allocation to this sector. This situation makes it practically difficult for the classroom teacher to provide even for the barest necessities of teaching and learning – instructional materials. This, no doubt, has some adverse consequences on the teaching and learning of most subjects in the secondary school curriculum including social studies.

Objectives of the Study

Mainly, the study focused on assessing the frequency use of improvised instructional materials and teachers’ attitude toward students’ performance in social studies. Specifically, the study sought:

1. To determine the relationship that exist between the frequency of use of improvised instructional materials and students’ performance in social studies;
2. To examine the relationship that exist between teachers’ attitude towards the use of improvised instructional materials and students’ performance in social studies.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between the frequency of use of improvised instructional materials and students’ performance in social studies?
2. What is the relationship between teachers’ attitude towards the use of improvised instructional materials and students’ performance in social studies?

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between teachers’ use of improvised instructional materials and students’ performance in social studies.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between teachers’ attitude towards the use of improvised instructional materials and students’ performance in social studies.

Frequent Use of Instructional Materials

Frequency refers to the rate at which something happens or is repeated. And, this is usually measured over a particular length of time. Contextually speaking, it implies the rate at which improvised instructional materials are repeatedly used during instruction.

In a survey by Inyang-Abia (2004), on the frequency of use of instructional materials in the teaching and learning of English Language using 72 secondary school teachers, it was discovered that chalkboard, bulletin boards, still pictures, wall charts and flash cards were used often in the teaching and learning of English Language in Nigerian secondary schools. A survey of the use of improvised instructional materials in secondary schools in Bori, Port Harcourt, by Neanekezi (2000) revealed that the frequency of use of improvised materials was affected by schools' location, availability, ease of use, favorable response from students and facilitation of teaching and learning. He further argued that even though the frequency of use is affected by these factor, their rate varies in degrees.

Mkpa (1995:146) undertook an analysis of the junior secondary school social studies curriculum to identify the educational technology materials that could be frequently used in teaching the various specific contexts of subject matter. His findings showed that for every unit or topic both projected and non-projected aids can be effectively used for its teaching. Non-projected aids include (pictures, charts, maps, models diorama, diagrams, storyboards, newspaper cuttings, flannel-graph, rolligraph). Projected aids include (still picture, video recordings of certain events in society, films and filmstrips etc.)

According to Dike (1989) instructional materials for social studies instruction comprises of diagrams, maps, sketches, globes, charts, models mock-ups, realia, bulletins, graphs, cartoons, pictures, photographs, boards, toys, books, tracts, posters, specimens. On the other hand, Gana (1982) maintained that pictures, are the oldest, least expensive and most universally available of all materials of instruction. According to Ogar (1998), regular utilization of improvised instructional materials in instruction can make learners understand faster and more easily too. Above all, the knowledge gained is also retained for a longer time. In his bid to find out the extent to which visual materials are used to help students retain what they have learnt during instruction, Obia (1982) discovered that the shorter and sharper the visual impact is, the longer it stays in the mind for many years. This establishes the fact that pupils learn fast and more effectively when they are presented with adequate visual materials than when they are left to wallow in abstract imagination. If pupils are not presented with an opportunity to participate actively in lessons, the tendency for them perhaps would be to abhor most subjects.

According to Elekwa and Eze (2002:174-175) when improvised instructional materials are properly and frequently utilized they can accomplish seven objectives.

1. They supply a concrete basis for conceptual thinking and reduce meaningless word responses of pupils.
2. They make learning more permanent
3. They have a high degree of interest for pupils.
4. They offer quality experience, which stimulated self-activity on the pupils.
5. They develop continuity of thought; this is especially true of motion pictures.
6. They contribute to growth of meaning and hence to vocabulary development.
7. They provide experiences, not easily obtained through other materials and contribute to the efficiency, depth and variety of learning.

Obiawu (1984), noted that apart from the fact that the utilization of instructional materials helps the teachers in their teaching. Dike (1987:10) has emphasized the need for the utilization of audio-visual materials in teaching and learning since it is difficult to get at real experiences.

In a study on educational resource situation in Ogun State primary schools, Oyedele (1992) reported that, the achievement of the goals and objectives of education depended overwhelmingly on the frequent utilization of educational facilities and teaching aids, among other variables. Also, Okunola (1985) observed that, educational materials were unevenly distributed and poorly used in Ogun State and this had negative effect on student's academic performance. Joof (1989), Mkpa (1993) and Onyesom (1991) have in their separate works reported on the impact of the dearth and poor utilization of instructional materials on the effective teaching and learning of social studies. In a study carried out by Iheanacho (1995) on media and materials in secondary schools in Port Harcourt, it was discovered that the rate or frequency of utilization of materials was affected by the following factors: location of school, availability of materials, ease of use, favored response from students and facilitation of teaching and learning. He concluded that even though the frequency of utilization of improvised instructional materials was based on the factors enumerated above, their rate of utilization varied in degrees.

From the foregoing, therefore, the frequency of improvised materials utilization would not only improve the quality of education but would also make it more meaningful to the students (Adeyanju, 1999; Ajelabi, 2002; Ibe-Bassey, 2004).

Teacher' Attitude towards the Use of Improvised Instructional Materials and Students' Performance

Attitude as a psychological concept evades a clear-cut definition. Inyang-Abia (1988) defined attitude as "a desire or tendency to approach or avoid something". He further claimed that attitude has intensity and direction. These definitions confirm that attitude may be positive or negative. And according to McGuire (1986) attitudes are formed and are very instructional to achieving set goals. Attitudes are the causes of a person's behavior towards another or an object. According to Ezewu and Okoye (1981), attitude refers to how one thinks, feels and acts towards people or situation. Psychologists and educators believe that attitudes are learned and developed through experience. Attitudes are directional orientation towards persons and a body of abstract objects or concepts. Expression like we are "for" or "against" "something"; we "prefer" one thing or another; we "like" or "dislike" are all examples of attitudinal disposition. Attitudes consist of beliefs, feelings, interest, likeness, anxiety, perception and motivation. This explains why the attitude of teacher towards the subject (social studies) they teach and the instructional materials they use influence the subjects offered, their students and consequently their performances.

According to Okoro (2002), attitudinal factors have great influence on learning and students' achievement. Denga (1998) averred that teacher-students' attitudinal similarity influences the amount of actual information a student retains. Teachers exhibit an ambivalent attitude towards the utilization of improvised instructional materials in teaching and learning as evident in the extant literature. Their disposition toward the use of improvised materials is either negatively maintain that their use is unnecessary, burdensome, irrelevant and insignificant to both the teachers and the students. Those with positive perception see the use of improvised instructional materials as indispensable and an integral component of the teaching-learning process.

Implicit in Salawu (1992) observation is that most teachers have no interest in the use of improvised instructional materials or lack the will to explore all possibilities of seeking for the needed materials within and outside the school environment. These materials are occasionally used to pass the teaching practice exercise or used based on other compelling circumstances. Okoro (2002) noted one cannot do what he does not like properly. Elekwa and Eze (2002) are of the view that some teachers develop an aversion to and phobia for the use of improvised instructional materials despite their effectiveness in the instructional process. This situation has some negative consequences on the teaching learning process. According to Ajayi (1987), teachers' interests, attitudes and values, to a large extent, determine their teaching effectiveness. Murkherja (1987) claimed that teachers' attitudes are often a satisfactory predictor of students' performance in schools. However, some teachers develop a favorable attitude towards the utilization of improvised instructional materials to enhance students' performance. In fact, without a sound knowledge and wholesome attitude towards effective teaching of social studies using appropriate instructional materials, the talk of producing vibrant generation of youths would be like "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing (William Shakespeare).

In a study on teachers' perception of the effects and use of learning aids in teaching in Winneba secondary schools in Ghana, Adeyanju (2005) reported that the interest of practicing teachers in the use of (improvised) instructional materials often diminishes upon qualification and appointment as permanent teachers. Elekwa and Eze (2002) identified lack of interest and impatience in practice as responsible for teachers' low utilization of chalkboard, among other variables. Lack of incentives has hampered and discouraged teachers from improvising instructional materials for social studies instruction. According to Akanbi (1991), most of our present day classroom teacher are handicapped by inadequate funding to produce instructional materials while others do not have the competence and requisite skills to design and produce them.

Aniemeka (1992) maintained that people (including teachers) tend to look down on improvised instructional materials collection because of their crude finishing in spite of their cheap and need-serving orientation. He suggested that both teachers and learners should be encouraged, guided and assisted in making their own instructional materials. To promote a favourable attitude towards the use of improvised materials in schools and improve performance of students, Adeyanju (2005) called for teachers' regular attendance at conferences, workshops and exhibitions on improvisation. According to Akinyemi (1991), attendance at workshops and exhibitions on improvisation can promote in teachers a more positive attitude towards the use of locally-made instructional materials in enhancing effective and efficient instruction. In a study on factors that condition students' attitude towards geography, Okoli (1993) summed them as follows:

- a. poor teaching and learning situation
- b. limitation of background
- c. lack of specialist teachers
- d. contagious group attitude

He asserted that school atmosphere could have profound effect on the attitude students develop towards school subjects. The importance of this finding to this study is that poor teaching and learning situation of which the use of instructional materials is implied and lack of specialists (professional teachers) are those variables the researcher intends to evaluate to determine how they predict students' academic performance.

From the literature reviewed so far on teachers' attitude towards the use of improvised instructional materials, it is shown that some teachers have penchant for the use of improvised instructional materials while others do not. Their partial use or outright disuse sometimes stems from lack of motivation and incentives from within and outside the schools' environment. This may dampen teachers' enthusiasm culminating in students' poor performance in many school subjects, including social studies. The findings of this study shall contribute to this assertion.

Methodology

Research design

A research design is essentially a plan for the conduct of a study. For the purpose of this study, survey and quasi-experimental designs was used.

Study area

The study was carried out in the Central Senatorial District of Cross Rivers State comprising of six local government area namely: Abi, Boki, Etung, Ikom, Obubra and Yakurr.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all the social studies teachers and students in the 89 secondary schools (JSS II) in the Central Senatorial District of Cross River State. The population of teachers was estimated at 89 representing 53 males and 36 females.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A total sample of 612 subjects drawn from 12 secondary schools was used for the survey study. The sample consisted of 12 teachers teaching and 600 students offering social studies in JSS II students from selected schools.

Instrumentation

The two instruments used for the study was questionnaire and performance test.

Validation of instruments

The face, content and construct validation of the two researcher-designed instruments were ascertained by the supervisor, who incidentally is a long standing professor of educational technology as well as five other experts in social studies, educational technology and measurement and evaluation. In the final analysis, the items which were adequate enough to validly measure what it intended to measure were retained, while irrelevant ones were discarded.

Reliability of the instruments

As a measure of forestall the introduction of error into the study and ensure the reliability of the research-designed instruments, the researcher conducted a pilot study using 10 teachers and 50 junior secondary school II students.

Administration of the instruments

The researcher carried out administration of teachers' questionnaire and social studies performance test to students. To facilitate the exercise, the researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the

Head of Department to each of the schools used for the study. With the assistance of the principals of the schools sampled, the teachers' utilization of improvised instructional materials questionnaire was administered to 12 JSS II social studies teachers after a thorough explanation of the purpose of the study.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between teachers' frequency of use of instructional materials and students' performance in social studies.

Independent variable: teachers' frequency of use of improvised instructional materials.

Dependent variable: students' performance in social studies

Test statistics employed: One-way Analysis of variance

TABLE 1a: Descriptive statistics of the influence of teachers' frequency of use of improvised instructional materials on students' performances in social studies

Teachers' frequency use of improvised instructional materials	n	\bar{X}	SD
High	73	64.86	6.33
Moderate	118	61.80	6.49
Low	409	55.17	5.92
Total	600	60.61	

TABLE 1b: One-way analysis of variance of the influence of teachers' frequency of use of improvised instructional materials on students' performance in social studies

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F
Between	8781.61	2	4390.8	37.813*
Within	69323.19	597	116.12	
Total	78104.87	599		

***Significant at .05 level: df = 2 & 597: critical F=3.00**

Results of the analysis presented in tables 1a & b shows that the calculated f-ratio of 37.813 was higher than the critical f-ratio of 3.00 at .05 level of significance with 2 and 597 degrees of freedom. This implies that there is significant influence of teachers' use of improvised instructional materials on students' academic performance in social studies. The null hypothesis was rejected. To discover the category of level of use of the instructional materials (high, moderate and low), which accounted for the significant influence, a post-hoc comparison among means was carried out and the results presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Fisher's protected t-test analysis of the comparison among means

Level of use of improvised materials	High	Moderate	low
High	64.85a	1.90c	7.07*
Moderate	3.05b	61.80	5.89*

Low 9.68 6.63 55.17

***Significant at 0.5 level**

- (a) All means are along the major diagonal
- (b) Differences among means are below the major diagonal
- (c) T-values are above the major diagonals

Results of analysis in Table 2 indicate that there was a significant difference among means between “high and low” and “moderate and low” use of improvised instructional materials. The result of this study shows that teachers frequent use of improvised instructional materials has significant influence on students’ academic performance in social studies. This implies that students’ performance in social studies is significantly related to the degree of utilization of improvised instructional materials. The finding is in agreement with Ibe-Bassey (2004) assertion that the learning process typically includes the use of instructional materials. According to Ekpo (1992) these materials are used to either supplement classroom instruction or used as a material carrying the primary task of teaching so that the teacher only becomes supplementary.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between teachers’ attitude towards the use of improvised instructional materials and students’ performance in social studies.

Independent variable: teachers’ attitude towards the use of improvised instructional materials, which is categorized into positive and negative.

Dependent variable: students’ performance in social studies

Test statistics employed: independent t-test. The results of the analysis have been presented

TABLE 3: Independent t-test analysis of the difference in performance of students whose teachers have positive attitude and those whose teachers have negative attitude towards the use of improvised instructional materials

variable	n	\bar{X}	SD	t
students whose teachers have positive attitude toward use of materials	213	67.83	5.64	26.41*
students whose teachers have positive attitude toward use of materials	387	54.89	5.92	

***Significant at 0.05; df= 610; critical t= 1.965**

Results of analysis in Tables 3 show that the calculated t-value of 26.41 was greater than the critical t-value of 1.965 at 05 level of significance with 610 degrees of freedom. This implies that there is a significant difference in performance between students whose teachers had positive attitude towards the use of improvised instructional materials and students whose teachers has negative attitude, with those whose teachers positive towards the use improvised instructional materials performing significantly better than those whose teachers has negative attitude. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The findings of this study revealed that students whose teachers had positive attitude towards the use of improvised instructional materials performed significantly better than those whose teachers showed negative attitude. These findings are in contrast with the views of Neanekezi (2000) that there is a growing tendency among teachers and learners to

discountenance the utilization of improvised instructional materials because they have little value in the teaching and learning process.

Conclusion

The importance of instructional materials cannot be predominated. If the teacher lacks basic instructional materials, the effectiveness of his lesson delivery will be limited. Thus, improvisation demands from teachers some degree of resourcefulness, utilization prowess and the resolve to face the challenge of effective teaching with optimism. The study therefore concluded that there is significant relationship between teachers' use, and teachers' attitude towards the use of improvised instructional materials and students' performance in social studies.

Recommendations

1. School administration must ensure regular utilization of improvised instructional materials in instruction, this can make learners understand faster and more easily too.
2. The government must ensure that adequate funding be made to the educational sector in order to purchase adequate instructional materials for efficient social studies learning.
3. The school management must employ specialists (professional teachers) for the effective utilization of instructional materials.
4. Teachers' should ensure regular attendance of conferences, workshops and exhibitions on improvisation, in order to promote a favorable attitude towards the use of improvised materials in schools and improve performance of students.

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