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PLACED-BASED EXPERIENCES OF THE YOUNG ADULT INMATES IN NSUKKA CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

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ABSTRACT: *Considering the peculiarities of the young adults in their transition period from adolescence to adulthood, this study aims to explore the place based experiences among young adult inmates in Nsukka Correctional Centre. Exploratory qualitative research design was employed. 15 young adults that have spent between 1 month and 10 years were purposely selected for the study. Informed consent form was signed by the participants after due explanations of the research purpose. Data were collected through face to face in-depth interviews done in a quiet office to maintain privacy. The data were transcribed, analyzed thematically and emergent themes were supported by quotes from the respondents. Findings from the study showed that the young adults were depressed, longed for freedom to become productive, regretted past mistakes and bored of regimented life. Recommendations were made for the reduction of the number of young adult inmates, by ensuring access to opportunities and increased support that enhance restoration from any long-term negative physical and mental health effects of incarceration and skills needed for resilience and effective functioning for sustainable national transformation when re-integrated into the society.*

KEYWORDS: Place-Based, Experiences, Young Adults, Inmates, Nsukka Correctional Centre



INTRODUCTION

Living with unknown individuals from different backgrounds and orientations, separation from loved ones in a confined inmate environment with the associated stressors can be emboldened with unpleasant feelings and experiences for the young adult. A community of place or place-based community is a community of people who are bound together by residence, work, and visit or spend a constant portion of their time together (Ramsey & Beesley, 2007). Confinement has a way of taking a toll on the mental health of inmates because suddenly the incarcerated are charged to deal with the long sentences, separation from loved ones and prison environment with the associated stressors with possible consequence of depression (Fingerman, 2017). The inmate's environment is laden with experiences of mental health stressors including elevated levels of depression, loneliness, nervousness, and anxiety amongst the individuals (Lindquist, 2000). Incarceration isolates and dramatically limits opportunities to build prosocial peer relationships, prevents youth from developing autonomy, and offers few meaningful pathways for skill development and can also be traumatizing for many young adults (Wolff & Shi, 2009). Young adults in this place-based community seem to find inmate life challenging considering their age. To provide an operational definition for the purpose of this study, place-based experiences consist of the experiences that these individuals undergo as they share their residence, work, and spend a significant portion of their time together (Ramsey & Beesley, 2007). The statistics of young adults have continued to have a steady increase globally. 1.2 billion young adults aged 15 to 24 years (16 per cent) form the global population, projected to increase by 62 percent over the next three decades, rising from 207 million in 2019 to 336 million in 2050. The sub-Saharan Africa is expected to have the largest increase (UNDESA, 2019a). Nigeria's population is currently 212,582,820 (World Population Review, 2021). According to population projections by the United Nations for 2020, about 43 percent of the Nigerian population comprised children 0-14 years, 19 percent age 15-24 years and about 62 percent are below age 25 years. By contrast, less than 5 percent are aged 60 years and above. This makes Nigeria a youthful population with a median age of about 18 years, which is lower than Africa and world estimates of 20 and 29 respectively (World Population Review (2021; Soyinka, 2020). The economic impact of unemployment on the young adult has become worrisome. United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) 2021 reported that young people in Nigeria are calling on leaders and the government to set up structures and put policies in place to reduce the socio-economic impact of the pandemic, and of course, all other austere conditions on young people. From the ongoing, Nigeria is made up of a good number of young adults. These young adults engage in various forms of legal and illegal activities to cater for their personal needs and those of their families, given that the bulk of them may be their families' breadwinners.

Young adults' ages vary from country to country and from one authority to another. However, the term young adult is used to define inmates aged between 18 and 25 years (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, 2017). Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2018) affirms that young adulthood is generally defined as 18 to 25 while the United Nations defines young adulthood as 15 to 24 years (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2019). In Nigeria, persons between 18 to 35 are considered youth (Federal Ministry of Health, 2009) with no specific age range for young adults to the researchers best of knowledge. The researchers would have loved to adopt the Nigerian definition if it were within the transitory age of interest. Nevertheless, the study adopted the definition of young adults (18-25) by Massachusetts Institute of Technology because of the peculiarities of the age group. Due to the



developmental processes that take place at this period, young adults get themselves involved in so many activities, some of which are not healthy. Jurewicz (2015) averred that recent statistics show that about 40% of young adults aged 16–24 years have used illicit substances at least once. In addition, psychological disorders and behavioral problems such as substance abuse also reach their peak during young adult years, and rates of suicide attempts are most serious between ages 18 and 25.

It is imperative to note that young adults are in the stage of transition from adolescence to adulthood, bolstered with physical, physiological and psychological changes and activities. Young adulthood is described as "emerging adulthood," "the frontier of adulthood," or earlier, "the novice phase." (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2018). Lindell and Goodjoint (2020) pointed out that the life phase between adolescence and young adulthood is distinct. The transition to adulthood takes a gradual process that differs from person to person. Young adults are prone to poor decision-making, impulsivity, peer influence, accommodation change, great volatility and risky behavior (Arnett, 2015). However, having effective support structures in place would ensure that the young adulthood period is marked by healthy risk-taking and positive experiences that will help the young person to be successful as an adult, rather than engaging in negative risk-taking that leads to precarious circumstances and trauma. Therefore, it is essential to focus more on this important age of transition, because if this psychological and social transition is not well handled, there may be adverse effects on the young adult's present and future well-being (Office for National Statistics, 2014). Smit, Weatherby and Creighton (2014) reiterated the importance of giving every offender the opportunity to rehabilitate whilst serving his/her sentence, with the prospect of eventually functioning as a responsible member of the free society. This is because, whereas these changes are all developmentally normal, they are associated with numerous challenges (Lindell & Goodjoint, 2020).

Young adults have distinct characteristics that distinguish them from the older adults. Young adults are particularly skilled in maintaining contradictory emotions, confident while still being cautious and enthusiastic in the face of large degrees of uncertainties (Arnett, 2015). Young adults function in the same way with the older peers in calm situations, however, in conditions of hot reasoning, their intellect works like that of a 16 or 17 year-old evidenced by the high susceptibility to peer pressures (Michaels, 2016). It is also a time of great instability; life plans shift, residences change; and change of romantic partners. Jurewicz (2015) noted that young adulthood is a time of taking on responsibilities and frequently rebelling against them, establishing independence and facing consequences of actions. Young adulthood thinking capacities, relationship skills, emotion regulations are not likely to be at a developmental level where they have enough ability to cope with the demands of a diverse global, technological, rapidly-changing world (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2018). Young adults have very high rates of mental health disorders and are particularly vulnerable to addiction and substance use disorders, suicidal behaviours, eating disorders, high levels of poor health than at other ages, more likely to self-harm more likely to smoke cigarettes and abuse alcohol, prone to accidents and serious injuries (Lindell & Goodjoint, 2020; Allen, 2016; Jurewicz, 2015). This is simply because of their increased drive for activities of all sorts without commensurate developmental stability.

Some young adults living in abject poverty and crime areas may have experienced one disheartening situation or the other that may force them into unhealthy and detrimental decision making. These young adults with fewer resources face additional challenges and often find the



consequences of their mistakes, miscalculations, and misfortunes compounded when they also lose access to their existing support systems (Lindell & Goodjoint, 2020). Soyinka (2020) observed that young Nigerians between the ages of 18 and 30 years are the major victims of extortion and police brutality in the country, often framed as lazy and fraudulent and constantly harassed by the police. This is coupled with the fact that 34.9 percent of Nigerian youths are unemployed. Unemployment stood at 21.7 million in the second quarter of 2020 out of which are 13.9 million young adults. It is widely recognized that incarceration diminishes the wellbeing of individuals during and after (Fazel & Baillargeon, 2011); other common features of incarceration can be deeply harmful during this developmental period and separation from family connection can be experienced as a form of trauma (Barnert et al., 2017). Research shows that institutional settings harm young people developmentally, psychologically, and physically (Juveniles for Justice, 2018). Allen (2016) asserted that young adults are also more likely to self-harm in incarceration than older ones. Loneliness experienced by incarcerated young adults can affect their overall health, leading to poorer sleep (Schrempft, Jackowska and Hamer, 2019) and negative health consequences including cardiovascular disease, depression, stress (Hämmig, 2019).

It was observed that many studies have been carried out on older adults and younger adults in incarceration in Nigeria. However, to the best of knowledge of the researchers, no study has been carried out in the country on the young adults between the ages of 18 to 25 years with the aim of exploring their place-based experiences as inmates in a correctional center, bearing in mind the peculiarities of their transitory phase from adolescence to adulthood. The researchers therefore, intend to explore the experiences of these young adults (18-25) considering their developmental period. If this is achieved, it will enable the prison warden and officers to note more effective remedial services that will benefit the inmates who need these correctional services for appropriate reintegration into the society.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Study Design

Exploratory qualitative design was employed for this study which afforded the opportunity to deeply explore the experiences of selected young adults (Bryman, 2016). The study was conducted inductively to allow themes and findings to emanate from the data rather than restricting the findings to a preselected theoretical framework (Gobena & Hean, 2019).

Sample and Sampling Procedures

The study was centered on young adults (18 to 25 years) in Nsukka Correctional Centre. Therefore, the data for the study were collected from 12 young adult males in Nsukka Correctional Centre, Enugu State. The Nsukka Correctional Centre accommodates only males. Using purposive sampling technique, young adults who were willing to discuss their experience were selected (Bryman, 2016). The choice of 12 participants was suitable because it reached the saturation point where additional data do not lead to any new emergent themes (Given, 2016). The differences in their characteristics made room for some diversity in participants' perspectives. Getting at the inmates for participation was not very easy because the study was conducted in an incarceration center where protocols were strictly observed.

**Table 1. Characteristics of participants**

S/N	Names Coded	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Occupation	Educational Status	Religion	Duration of Incarceration	Sentence
1	Inmate A	21	M	Single		JS3	Christianity		ATM
2	Inmate B	18	M	Single	Job Man	SS2	Christianity	10 months	ATM
3	Inmate C	25	M	Single	Wine Tapper	JS3	Christianity	19 months	ATM
4	Inmate D	18	M	Single	Apprentice	JS3	Christianity	2 months	ATM
5	Inmate E	24	M	Single	Trader	SS1	Christianity	21 months	ATM
6	Inmate F	25	M	Single	Installation	JS3	Christianity	6 months	ATM
7	Inmate G	21	M	Single	Tiling	JS3	Christianity	14 months	
8	Inmate H	25	M	Single	Driver	JS3	Christianity	36 months	ATM
9	Inmate I	20	M	Single	Mechanic	JS2	Christianity	24 months	ATM
10	Inmate J	24	M	Married	Motor Alignment	SS2	Christianity	24 months	ATM
11	Inmate K	20	M	Single	Car Wash	Primary 4	Christianity	12 months	ATM
12	Inmate L	19	M	Single		Primary 6	Christianity	36 months	ATM

Source: Data Collected on place-based experiences of young adult inmates, 2021

Table 1 shows that the 12 young adult male who were chosen to participate in the study aged between 18 and 25 years. Only one is married. All were into one menial job or the other. The level of education shows that two had primary education and 10 did not complete secondary education. All (100%) of the participants are Awaiting Trial Males (ATM) and all were Christians. Duration of incarceration ranges from 2 to 36 months. All 12 young adults participated in the interview by choice and they were given informed consent which they read and signed.

Data Collection

Data for the study were collected using semi-structured in-depth interviews developed by the researchers and validated by experts in the Faculty of Social Sciences (Departments of Psychology and Social Work). In-depth interview was chosen because of their suitability for studies focused on exploring participants' experience and understanding of a given phenomena (Bryman, 2016). The semi-structured nature of the interviews was suitable for this study's inductive design, allowing the discussions to go in the direction of issues raised by participants in the course of the interviews (Ekoh George & Ezulike, 2021). The interviews were conducted using Igbo language and were recorded in the process. Precautionary measures were employed including wearing of facemasks and social distancing. Discussions were held in their chapel which was spacious enough. The ethical requirements for qualitative research were observed including obtaining informed consent from participants after detailed information about the study was given and ensuring the interviews were conducted in a space, method and language that assured their safety, comfort and complete involvement, during the data collection (Bryman, 2016; Pittaway et al., 2010). Due approval for the study was received.



Data Analysis

The recorded data were transcribed using a verbatim transcription. Verbatim transcription of qualitative research interviews allows room for researchers to explore and have in-depth insights of the experiences and perceptions of the participants (Sebastian, 2021). The Igbo language was transcribed in English with strict effort made to be as close as possible to participants' original statements in Igbo. The researchers compared the transcribed versions with the recorded interviews to ascertain that it retained the original ideas of the participants and to guarantee validity of data. The participants were involved in the process to ascertain whether the findings were their original idea, in order to further increase the validity.

The participants' names were not included, but coded with inmates A to L after the transcription to ensure confidentiality. For illustration, Inmate A, M, 20 represents a twenty year old male coded as Inmate A. After the transcription, a thematic analytical method was used to analyze the data, and this involved using data to discover, interpret and report meaning patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researchers engaged in multiple reading of the transcripts to identify emerging themes; this was done to ensure validity and trustworthiness of the results. During the coding and analysis, an inductive approach was adopted. Identified emerging codes and patterns through multiple reading were organized in themes after comparing transcripts by the researchers (Bryman, 2016). The findings were supported by quotes from the respondents.

RESULTS

Incarceration experiences were very overwhelming for the young adults. However, three major themes emerged from the findings; the first illustrates how the young adults were always thinking about their lives, isolated from other inmates, sad about everything and hopeless (depression). Secondly, they wished it never happened and wished there could be a rewind in the hands of the clock for corrections to be made (regrets for offenses committed). Thirdly, they want to be reunited to friends and families, tired of restrictions and regimented life, desires to have access to what they love doing best (urgent need for freedom).

Depression

Living with family and friends, doing what one loves to do gives joy and confidence, but when on the contrary one ends up in incarceration for whatever reason, life becomes boring, sad, hopeless and lonely in the midst of multitude. The findings showed that the majority of the young adults were actively depressed. They feel that all their mates have outrun them and that life is not treating them well. Some of them seem to forget that what they were going through is the dividend of their actions. Inmate A recounts;

I don't feel like talking to anybody, instead I prefer staying alone in my little corner without relating to anyone (Inmate A).

From the findings, most of the young adults hardly smile. They look so dejected and rejected and complain that some of the inmates are even making matters worse by not showing any sign of change. This worsens their feeling of hopelessness. Inmate C narrates;



It can only take God to change someone in this 'land' (as they generally call the Correctional Centre). Some of us come here and become more hardened instead of becoming better people. This makes me more hopeless and down (Inmate C)

There is a complaint about the rationing of food in the Centre. The young adults keep remembering how well they feed at home and feel bad that they eat less now. Not just eating less amount of food, but eating what they do not like eating. Moreover, it is to eat or go hungry.

They give us small portions of food and nobody cares whether you are satisfied or not. Who will even ask you? (Inmate C)

Regrets for offenses committed

Young adults are prone to overstep their boundaries and when they fail, they are usually full of regrets. All the inmates interviewed reported that they regretted their offenses. Many narrated how they were deceived and influenced negatively by bad friends.

I was deceived by my friend when I came to the village to assist my aunty in farm work. It all happened that I exhausted the money I came home with, unfortunately my aunty was not taking good care of me and I needed money. I joined my friend to go and steal from someone's house and both of us were caught. My friend is even here with me (Inmate E)

Some inmates admitted that their problem was that they were disobedient to their parents and would not listen to any advice from anyone. Now they are regretting their actions.

I don't know anything called 'law', but I have learnt law in this land. I wish I have a second chance, if I do, I will never touch someone again in my life and will never go near somebody's belonging (Inmate E)

Many of the young adults regretted taking themselves out of home because of their offenses. They expressed loss of the warmth of family and friends. Some lamented that since their incarceration, no family member ever visited them.

I regret that I pushed myself away from my family and friends by my misbehaviours. Nobody has visited since I came here, in fact, I need help (Inmate F).

Need for Freedom

Freedom is one benefit nature accorded to everyone, but unfortunately, incarcerated young adults do not have freedom. They live regimented lives burdened with do's and don'ts. This type of life is a very hard nut for the young adults who are full of activities to crack.

Oh no! I have lost my life, no movement, no will of your own. These people keep tossing us up and down. I can't wait to get out of this strange land (Inmate F)

Others were claiming to have committed no offense but regretted that the bad company they kept brought them to this land.

I regret disobeying instructions. I was always hanging out with older friends. I was warned but would not listen; now I am the one suffering for my disobedience. I want to go home (Inmate A).



Majority of the young adults said that if they were free by now they would have been established in business or completed their education. The only married man among them lamented that he would have been with his family by now. He pointed out his fear that the wife might be tempted to be promiscuous because of hardship and so desires freedom urgently.

I wish to leave this land so that I will go and reunite with my wife and two children. I am scared that my wife will become promiscuous because of suffering. I am dying little by little (Inmate J).

The findings showed that all of the participants are Awaiting Trial Males (ATMs). None of their cases has been determined and no one knows when they will be taken to court for trial of their case. Some are just two months waiting while others have waited for as long as 36 months. Majority of them claim that they were dumped at the Centre because they do not have money to pay a lawyer that can facilitate their case.

I have nobody that can help me. My people do not have money to pay a lawyer to assist me get out of this land. I don't want to continue staying here, yet I don't know when and how I can go to court. I need help (Inmate I).

DISCUSSION

This study explored the experiences of 12 young adults in Nsukka Correctional Centre. The analysis of in-depth interviews conducted with the young adults revealed that many suffer from depression. Bearing in mind the uniqueness of this stage of life, there is a dire need to provide a conducive environment for the developmental processes of the young adult to flourish, even when they offend. Young adults abhor vacuum, always longing to be busy with one thing or the other. When a conducive environment is not provided for them to be positively productive, they tend to get themselves involved with the wrong things that lead to their ending up as inmates. It is a general knowledge in our country Nigeria that most incarcerated inmates stay a long time as Awaiting Trial Males. Incarceration diminishes the wellbeing of individuals during and after incarceration (Fazel & Baillargeon, 2011). Loneliness and isolation can lead to a wide range of negative health consequences including depression and suicide (Hämmig, 2019). Many complained that the environment alone makes them sick. Mental health stressors in the incarceration environment include elevated levels of depression, loneliness, nervousness, and anxiety (Lindquist, 2000). The findings from the young inmates revealed that they don't have the privilege of doing what their heart desires. This is affecting them a lot because they are in the period of increased activity. There is a need to give every offender the privilege of rehabilitation whilst serving sentence, with the view of the offender ultimately functioning responsibly in the society (Smit, Weatherby & Creighton, 2014). Connecting young people to strong educational and career services including vocational rehabilitation and workforce development programs can help them avoid justice involvement or get back on the right track if they do become involved in the justice system (The Aspen Institute, 2014), and in turn prevent depression.

The young adult inmates regretted their irrational actions. Young adults establish their independence and face the consequences of their actions (Jurewicz, 2015). Their offenses resulted in separation from family and friends leading to isolation in an unknown land as they fondly call the Correctional Centre. Incarceration can be deeply harmful during this



developmental period, and separation from family can itself be experienced as a form of trauma (Barnert, 2017). This forms a great regret for these young adults.

Young adults love freedom and activity is a norm for them, therefore, anything stopping them from being active is not a welcome development for them. Confinement can mean social and sensory isolation for up to 23 hours a day. Given their developmental stage, this practice puts young people at especially serious risk for long-term psychological damage (Frank, 2017). From reviewed literature, incarceration is not the best correctional measure for young adults as it affects their developmental processes into full blown adulthood. Incarcerated young adults aged 18 to 24 offenders in adult establishments were found to be more likely to experience abuse and attempt suicide (Kolivoski & Shook, 2016). Suicidal attempt is as a result of loneliness, boredom, hopelessness and loss of savor for life. These young adults are left sitting in their cells with little to no opportunity to learn from past experiences, cope with underlying trauma, engage in meaningful accountability, and prepare for their future (Frank, 2017). With the understanding of the peculiarities of the young adult and the adverse and austere condition of the country, rehabilitation might be a better option than incarceration. There should be investment in the education, employment and health of the young people and creation of conditions conducive for sustained economic growth (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2019).

CONCLUSION

This Study explored the experiences of 12 young adults in Nsukka Correctional Centre. Qualitative design was employed and the findings revealed that these young adults are depressed as a result of their confinement. They regretted their actions that led to incarceration and wished for another chance. Finally, they were in desperate need of freedom. Majority of them lamented that they were tired of regimented and confined life. The researchers are of the opinion that there is a need to give every offender the privilege of rehabilitation whilst serving sentence, with the view of the offender ultimately functioning responsibly in the society.

Limitations

1. The number of young adults was not many, and it contributed to the limited number used in the study.
2. Nsukka Correctional Centre has only males, which led to the researchers using only male inmates instead of both sexes.

Recommendations

1. The young adult population (18 to 25) should be recognized as a distinct category from older adults.
2. Incarceration should be a last resort for young adults; investments should be made into seeking alternatives.
3. Government should involve these young adults in policies and decision making.



4. Where incarceration is absolutely necessary, there should be a strong focus throughout their period of custody on resettlement into the community.

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STUDENT-TEACHERS' INTEREST IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION AND THE FUTURE OF TEACHING AS A PROFESSION IN NIGERIA. A STUDY OF FACULTY OF EDUCATION STUDENTS, NIGER DELTA UNIVERSITY, BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *The teaching profession in Nigeria appears to suffer a lot of neglect compared to most other callings. Ironically, it is the teacher that trained all the professionals including the political class that tends to underrate teachers. Most young people seeking admissions would ordinarily consider this noble profession as their last option of study due to the perceived neglect of those already in the teaching system. In view of the above perception, this study was carried out at the Faculty of Education, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria to ascertain the extent of keen interest and zeal student-teachers would appreciate becoming teachers upon graduation from the university. The study adopted a simple random sampling technique to select 50 students each from the 6 (six) Departments within the Faculty to respond to the 12 items in the instrument developed by the researchers for the study. The instrument was presented to experts in Measurement and evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations and considered satisfied before they were administered to the randomly selected respondents. In all, 300 respondents among the 300 Level students served as respondents. Two research questions and one null hypothesis were posed and tested to guide the study. Frequency counts, percentages and mean scores of each item collated from the data and analysed were used to arrive at results for the two research questions, while Independent t-test statistics were applied to analyse for results with respect to the hypothesis. The results from the research questions indicated that the majority of the student-teachers were not interested in the teaching profession and would ordinarily opt out for other careers if they are opportuned to do so. However, the result of the hypothesis tested accepted the null hypothesis, indicating that there is no meaningful difference between student-teachers who will be interested in teaching as their future profession upon completion of their course of study and those who may not want to be teachers upon graduation. The study concluded among others that the issues of teacher welfare in terms of regular/prompt payment of salaries and boosting of their morale through motivational incentives and regular training in addition to considering the aptitude of the student's interest in becoming future teachers should be taken into consideration before they are admitted into the Faculties of Education pursue a course in education. This, no doubt, will check the attrition rate of teacher education graduates and save the future of the teaching profession.*

KEYWORDS: Student-Teacher, Teaching Profession, Future of Teaching, Nigeria.



INTRODUCTION

Student-teachers are pre-service teachers pursuing academic programmes either in Teachers Training Colleges; or other tertiary institutions of learning that are established to prepare professional teachers. The purpose of teacher education according to Oyekan (2006) is to produce qualified professional teachers that can adjust to the changing needs of the students as well as meet the needs of modern society. Closely linked to the above, Adewuji and Ogunwuyi (2002) see teacher education as the provision of professional educators committed to the preparation of qualified individuals who will be ready to nurture the younger ones into responsible, vibrant and talented citizens for a productive nation. The place of teacher education programmes is further explained by Paulley and Benwari (2019) to mean a period designed to groom those who teach or would like to teach or engage in relevant professional services in schools, colleges and ministries of education or other relevant organisations as the case may be. They maintained that the training acquired equipped the trainees to become competent and skilful, thereby improving the quality of the teachers in the school system and any other task assigned to them. The essence of the professional training of teachers is to ensure a desirable change in the behaviour and aspirations of the prospective teachers to match the demands of the profession (Okpaorim and Esu, 2019: 131). Teacher education is the process of preparing, training and educating a prospective teacher for his/her role performance in the classroom/the school setting. Teaching is a specialised area of education with policies, and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviour and skills they require to perform in the classroom, school and the wider society. It's aimed at producing effective, productive and quality teachers. It is important to state that globally, education is known to have helped societies advance their frontiers of knowledge, and create access to economic growth. Education is acquired through training, and the teacher is saddled with this responsibility. The ingenuity and diligence of a teacher are, therefore, a major yardstick for the technological advancement of any nation. Often, it is maintained that no nation can develop the quality of its human capacity beyond the quality of its teachers. The role of education universally is recognised as a process of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes to the learners. What this implies, therefore, is that the effectiveness of any educational system rests squarely on the qualitative output of its teachers.

A profession that plays such an enviable role in society certainly deserves to enjoy a pride of place in the committee of professions. For any nation to succeed in a technological age within the 21st Century, it beholds the government and citizenry to place serious emphasis on the products that will serve as teachers in the future. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, experience and close observation have indicated that a lot of student-teachers pursuing academic programmes in higher institutions of learning are actually not very keen or interested in the teaching profession. It is for this reason that the position by Ogunyinka, Okeke and Adedoyin (2015) appears apt. They submit that although both the government, education planners and designers might vote large sums of its revenue to education; it is the teacher that will ultimately enable the learner to acquire the set goals of educating the child. No one else but the teachers is expected to translate government policies into actions; principles into practice in the course of carrying out their duties in the classroom with the students. Going back memory lane, teaching was regarded as an enviable profession, but that golden age has since appeared to have passed



away. The value of teaching had eroded so much that student-teachers who are admitted to pursue courses in teaching appear not to be interested in becoming professionals upon graduation after their training. A career in teaching appears to be so debased or not encouraging to all strata of society. Most student-teachers certainly could not imagine themselves becoming teachers. This attitude had affected their psyche, hence some are shy even to introduce themselves publicly as students studying education. A mere observation would portray their inner drive and passion to have studied other courses that society considers noble. Such careers or programmes include law, medicine, accountancy, and engineering rather than teaching. In a study by Efe, Oral and Efe (2012), one of the findings revealed that student-teachers who had chosen to pursue a teaching degree as their first preference after the university entrance exams had a more positive attitude towards teaching than students to whom a teaching degree was not a high priority to during their quest for admission.

Studying attitudes or interests is considered imperative because at least some of the evidence involved suggest that it can be used as a predictor of behaviour (Bohner, 2001; Jaccard and Blankton, 2005). According to these scholars, in education, positive attitudes towards teaching are signs or potential for effective teaching (Stronge, 2002). Others such as Pigge and Marso (1997) had equally emphasised that a negative attitude towards teaching leads to teacher burnout, while interest and a positive attitude result in positive classroom behaviour. This by implication is that for teacher education programmes to provide prospective teachers with opportunities that shape their attitude, which without doubt are reflected in their positive approaches to teaching, the interest or zeal of the student-teacher is essential. Once teacher candidates are accepted to teacher education programmes based on their predisposition for careers in teaching and their attitude towards teaching, environment, social values and individual learners' needs, such opportunities may contribute positively to the quality of teacher education programmes (Oral, 2004).

Presently, there appear to be multiple obvious reasons why most young undergraduates may not develop much interest in the teaching profession in Nigeria. The career of teaching is seen as not attractive in terms of its remunerations to staff and standards in terms of the conducive working environment. Teachers are seen in the Nigerian setting especially due to the lack of political will and policy summer salts as a profession for those who had no other choice or career prospects in other viable sectors of the economy. Their workload appears to be too heavy, yet their conditions of service are not commensurate with what they deserve. Their social value and position had made most teachers develop complex problems psychologically. Under such terrible conditions, most young people can only see opportunities in teaching as a stepping stone for greater prospects in other programmes which will not direct them primarily to the classroom.

This study is conducted in the Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State Nigeria to find out if the literature reviewed above could be replicated for student-teachers pursuing undergraduate programmes in the Faculty of Education who actually have a keen interest and disposition for the teaching profession. The study will give a sense of direction to government and policymakers as to which options of remedy are left for the future of teacher



education bearing in mind for one to be in any profession, the person must first be taught by a teacher.

Problem of the Study

The teaching profession, without a doubt, is a major determinant of a nation's economic, technological, political and moral destiny. This fact underscores the necessity for teacher education to be perceived as a sacred duty that must not be taken lightly. The contributions of a teacher to creating an enlightened, disciplined, responsive and forthright society, behold them (teachers) to produce useful young people. Unlike the colonial period, the teaching job which ordinarily is supposed to recruit the most brilliant products is faced with the serious challenge of brain drain as the best students are rather moving to other professions that are believed to provide them with sustainable greener pastures. Teachers appear to have little social value in society despite their enormous contributions. Government policies that are intended to promote the welfare of teachers are being paid lip service and to a large extent issues with their welfare downplayed. Teachers' salaries are delayed most times without justifications and in some cases, even their pensions and gratuities upon meritorious retirement from service are denied them. No wonder Ajayi as cited by Ige & Adepoju (2021) had stated that the occupation enjoys the unpleasant nickname of an "ungrateful trade" a profession for the "never-do-wells" or occupation of the 'down-trodden'. An occupation which is viewed with contempt, a refuse dump for mediocrity, a profession with men and women who have only an average drive for power, ambition and escapism. Their work environments especially in most rural areas are extremely deplorable; those in the cities are over-stressed with over-crowded pupils/students in the classrooms; not forgetting excess workloads. These pillars of human development are so reduced and made an object of scorn by the very people they have empowered with various skills for society's growth do disparage those in the teaching field, what an irony! Young people are scared of becoming teachers because of the way teachers are being treated. Most young people consider it a curse for anybody to suggest that they apply to study education. Many teachers show an inferiority complex, low self-esteem, dissatisfaction, bitterness and every other thing that is demeaning.

A more critical factor for society to ponder is the issue of the candidates being admitted to study education programmes. Only a handful of the candidates appear to be actually desirous of a teaching career. Most of the others are candidates who had opted for other professional courses such as medicine, law and accountancy; however, because they are unable to meet the required cut-off marks or scores, these candidates are drifted to the faculty of education. Their mindsets may already be biased against the occupation, but the need for a degree or certificate becomes the primary reason for their stay in the faculty. According to Ikeotuonye (2000: 62), only boys and girls with poor O-level results reluctantly go to study education. Ikeotuonye further explained that even those who graduate with NCE, make frantic efforts to get into the university to read courses other than education. Only those who fail in this still read education most unhappily. Teacher education programmes appeared not to be competitive as it is like the last option for those who fail to make it to other distinguished sectors. Where teachers are expected to be sound, industrious, articulate and intelligent, a system that admits a relatively



unqualified crop of candidates is to an extent aberration. This acceptance of the role of a second fiddle could as well be a contributory negative and low rating of teachers in society.

The uncondusive nature of the work environment of teachers may also be a likely reason for the unattractiveness of potential teachers to opt for other careers. Many schools appear very unclean, there is infrastructural decay (including dilapidated walls as well as licking roofs) and near total absence of learning materials to facilitate effective classroom experiences for students to explore. Nigeria is one country where from every indications' academic knowledge means little or nothing to those in positions of authority. A nation where millions of naira (the country's currency) could be spent on television reality shows through sponsorship of some very immoral activities instead of supporting academic scholarship. Amidst all this, is also the fact that the profession appears to be very liberal in terms of recruitment of job seekers from other disciplines irrespective of what they studied. Some of the teachers might just be hanging on to teaching pending when their choice jobs prop up. Such teachers might be exhibiting a nonchalant attitude to the profession which is a potential danger to the students' academic future. From the existing literature, much research had been done regarding student-teachers interest towards teaching as a career in several universities elsewhere and Nigeria. This notwithstanding, no such study had specifically focused on the student-teachers of the Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa state, Nigeria. The study might help to expose government officials in the ministry of education and assist in opening avenues for broad and more robust ways to explore in encouraging young people to develop an interest in teaching as a career. It will also proffer possible strategies that could be adopted to encourage teachers to accept rural postings or be persuaded to serve in the very under-developed rural communities in the creeks of the deltaic Bayelsa state where most teachers prefer to stay only within the capital city (Yenagoa) and other settlement which are accessible by roads.

METHOD

The study adopted a descriptive survey design, with all third-year (300 level) students in the Faculty of Education, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa state, Nigeria comprising the population of the study. These students are considered to be mature enough to independently respond rationally to the items in the instrument. The Faculty is made up of six Departments namely Science Education; Social Science Education; Arts Education; Educational Foundations; Vocational /Technology Education; and Library and Information Technology Department. Fifty (50) students from each Department were randomly selected as a sample for the study bringing the too number of the sample to three hundred (300) students. Two research questions were posed to elicit responses from the sample. Again, one hypothesis was tested to find out the perception of the student-teachers regarding their interest towards the teaching profession. Responses for the research questions were analysed using frequency counts, and percentages. For every item where more than fifty per cent (50%), depending on the positivity or negative response (depending on how the question item is structured), it is either considered as being "Interested" in teaching; while scores below fifty per cent (from 10 – 49%) implies that the respondents are "not Interested" to serve as a teacher after training. To ensure the success of data administration and collation, the researcher obtained permission



from the various Heads of Departments for the 300-level students to respond to the items in the instrument. The researchers'-designed items were immediately retrieved from the respondents upon completion without any further delay.

Research Question 1: What is the extent of interest demonstrated by students in the Faculty of Education to study courses in Education willingly on their own accord?

Research Question 2: To what extent do students in the Faculty of Education demonstrate interest to become classroom teachers upon graduation?

Hypothesis 1: There is no mean difference between student-teachers with an interest to become professional teachers and those who do not show a keen interest in the Faculty of Education to be future teachers.

Table 1: Level of desire of students in the Faculty of Education

Items	ACCEPTED		REJECTED		Mean Score (X)		VERDI CT
	Frequency	Percent age	Freque ncy	Percent age	Positive	Negative	
1. I willingly choose to study a course in education	78	26%	222	74%	0.26	15.4	Rejected
2. I accepted to study education since I could not secure admission in my first-choice course	193	64.8%	107	36%	0.35	11.2	Accepted
3. I have always wanted to be a teacher.	82	27.3%	218	73%	0.27	0.74	Rejected
4. I accepted to study a course in education just to earn a degree	233	77.7%	67	27%	0.22	0.64	Accepted
5. I will prefer to be a career teacher instead of any other profession.	87	29%	213	71%	0.29	0.72	Rejected
6. I am ashamed to introduce myself as a future teacher	218	72,7%	82	27.3%	0.27	14.6	Accepted



RESULTS

Table 1: Research Question 1: What is the level of desire of students in the Faculty of Education

The study posed two research questions in order to elicit responses on the interest of the student-teachers towards the teaching profession upon completion of the programmes. The analysis from the data collated in Table 1 indicated that for item one (1) which enquired on whether the students willingly applied to study a course in education, 78 respondents representing 26 per cent of the total sample accepted that they enrolled on their own accord without pressure to study an education course. On the contrary, 222 representing 74 per cent admitted that it was not their intention to study courses in education as their first option while applying for admission.

For item two (2), 193 respondents representing 64 per cent attested that education was not their preferred programme of study while applying for admission. They, however, accepted programmes in education since their preferred courses do not offer them admission. It is clear from the analysis that 107 respondents, representing 36 per cent opted for programmes in education as their first choice.

Analysis from item three (3) revealed that 82 respondents representing 27 per cent wanted to serve as professional teachers from the onset while 218 of the sampled students representing 73 per cent never really wanted to be teachers even as they were studying courses in education.

The result of the fourth item (4) showed that 233 respondents which represent 73 per cent accepted that they are only studying courses in education to enable them to obtain a university degree or certificate. Only 67 respondents representing 27 per cent wholeheartedly desired to earn a degree in education and are willing to utilize the same in the classroom as teachers.

Furthermore, the result of data analysis from item 5, indicated that 87 respondents representing 29 per cent will prefer to be professional teachers rather than seek any other career. 213 respondents, representing 71 per cent of the sample may seek other professions if given the opportunity and chance.

Data analysis for item six (6), revealed that 218 respondents, representing 73 per cent of the sample perceive it as shameful to be introduced as future teachers. The rest 82 respondents indicated 29 per cent are not ashamed to be called future teachers.



Table 2: Research Question 2: To what extent are student-teachers interested in the teaching profession instead of other careers?

Items	ACCEPTED		REJECTED		Mean Score (X)		VERDICT
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Positive	Negative	
7. My interest in child development will not allow me to leave teaching as a career	63	21%	237	79%	0.21	19.0	Rejected
8. Other jobs may be better paid but I will rather stay as a teacher no matter the salary	58	19.3%	242	80.7%	0.18	20.7	Rejected
9. The work environment is not a priority conducive for me to ignore teaching for other professions.	108	36%	192	64%	0.36	11.1	Rejected
10. I see teaching as a stepping stone to advance other noble professions.	267	89%	33	11%	0.11	36.4	Accepted
11. My perception of poor salaries for teachers has increased my dislike for teaching.	228	76%	72	24%	0.24	16.7	Accepted
12. I appreciate that my children succeed me as a teacher when I retire finally	53	17.7%	247	82.3%	0.17	22.6	Rejected
					TOTAL = 2.93	TOTAL = 9.77	

Table 2 cover the analysis for item 7 – 12. Item seven (7) indicated that 63 respondents, that is 21 per cent will always want to remain teachers to develop the growing child. On the contrary, the data analysed show that 237 respondents (79 per cent) may not willfully stay in the classroom even if it means creating an opportunity to render their services for the development of the child.

Analysis from item eight (8) reveals that 58 responses, representing 19 per cent stated that despite other better-paid careers, they will rather remain as teachers. Alternatively, 242



respondents representing 81 per cent, revealed that with career opportunities with better incentives, they may migrate from teaching to some other profession.

The result of the data analysis for item nine (9) indicated that 108 respondents, representing 36 per cent will ignore conducive work environments to remain as teachers. On the other hand, the result of the study revealed that 192 (representing, 64 per cent) will rather appreciate working in better and more conducive work environments instead of the classroom or being a teacher.

Research question ten (10), shows from the data analysis that 267 respondents, representing 89 per cent perceived the teaching profession as a stepping stone to advance to other more rewarding and lucrative professions with better incentives. The analysis indicated that 33 respondents (11 per cent) perceived teaching as a career that they can remain with and equally develop themselves.

From the study results in item eleven (11), it was clear that 223 (76 per cent) perceived teachers as being poorly paid in terms of salaries. This notwithstanding, 72 respondents (24 per cent) perceived teachers' salaries as good and would therefore like to serve in the profession.

Item twelve (12), here again, the analysis revealed that 53 respondents (17 per cent of the student-teachers accepted that their children may wish to succeed them as teachers upon their retirement from active service. Main while, the analysis indicated that 247 respondents representing 83 per cent may not appreciate that their children succeed them as classroom teachers.

Hypothesis 1: There is no mean difference between student-teachers with an interest to become professional teachers and those who do not show a keen interest in the Faculty of Education to be future teachers.

The result from Hypothesis 1 shows that for Item 1, which states that “I willingly choose to study an education course, only a mean score of 0.26 respondents had a positive interest towards the teaching profession while a mean of 15.4 respondents indicated a not been interested in their choice of study.

Item 2 states that “I accepted to study education since I could not secure admission in my first choice course”. Only 0.35 indicated interest; while those who do not choose courses in education had a mean of 11.2.

In response to Item 3; “I have always wanted to be a teacher”. Positive mean responses stood at 0.27 while negative mean responses were 14.6.

Item 4: “I accepted to study a course in education just to earn a degree”. The mean result of the analysis indicated that 17.9 respondents choose positively while a mean score of 0.22 had a negative response.

Item 5; “I will prefer to be a career teacher instead of any other profession”. The positive mean score was 0.29 while the negative mean scores are 13.8.



Item 6; “I am ashamed to introduce myself as a future teacher”. Only a mean score of 0.27 respondents do not feel ashamed to be introduced as future teachers, while a mean score of 14.6 respondents felt ashamed to be called future teachers.

Item 7, “My interest in child development will not allow me to leave teaching as a career”. The positive mean score is 0.21 while the negative mean score is 19.0.

Item 8, “Other jobs may be better paid but I will rather stay as a teacher no matter the salary”. Those who will prefer to stay had a mean score of 0.18 while those who declined had a mean score of 20.7.

Item 9, “Conducive work environment is not a priority for me to ignore teaching for other professions”. Responses with a positive mean score are 0.36. The negative; mean score responses indicated 11.1.

Item 10, “I see teaching as a stepping stone to advance to other more honourable professions”. A mean score of 0.11 indicated positive while negative mean responses are 36.4.

Item 11, “My perception about poor salaries for teachers has increased my dislike for teaching”. Only 0.24 respondents do not have such a perception; however, a mean score of 16.7 will dislike teaching due to poor salaries.

Item 12, “I appreciate that my children succeed me as teachers when I retire finally”. Positive mean score responses are 0.17 while negative mean score responses indicated 22.6.

Sumatively a total mean score of 2.98 respondents are positive (interested) about the teaching/the teacher profession while a mean score of 22.6 of the respondents had a negative (not interested) perception of teaching, and the teaching profession.

Hypothesis 1: Table 3 Shows the data analysis that There is no mean difference between student-teachers with an interest to become professional teachers and those who do not show a keen interest in the Faculty of Education to be future teachers.



Table 3: Result of Hypothesis 1: Faculty of Education students' interest in the teaching profession.

N=300

Group	N	X	SD	STD. Error	Cal. V	Mean difference
Positive	77	0.244	0.303	0.092	2.88	1.98
Negative	223	6.881	0.96	0.92		

From the above T-Test result in Table 3 above, it indicates that the calculated t-ratio of -2.88 is less than the critical t-value of 1.98. By this result, the null hypothesis is accepted. It means there is no significant difference between students who have a positive interest in being retained in the teaching profession and those with negative perceptions.

DISCUSSION

From the results of the above analysis, it is clear to understand from research question one (1) that most students in the six Departments of the Faculty of Education in the Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria are not willfully (on their own volition) studying programmes in Education. Their original intention was to study other courses rather than to become teachers before. They are in most instances compelled to study courses that will train them to be teachers due to the fact that they can not meet up the admission cut-off marks in other faculties. This practice, however, may not be in the best interest of the teaching profession as these student-teachers may not be mentally prepared to accept their responsibilities as teachers upon graduation due to a lack of aptitude for the career. This submission is in line with Abanobi and Abanobi (2022). It is also fair to recall that Oyunyinka, Okeke and Adedoyin (2015) argued that no matter the number of funds prompted or released into the educational sector, can assure any significant impact; it is the readiness of the teacher to perform their duties holistically that is most significant. When the teacher is not desirous of carrying out their assigned teaching duties due to apathy, it is the future of the pupils and students that are doomed. Teachers in this category are not teachers but cheaters. Efe, Oral and Efe (2012) also in their studies concluded that student-teachers who willfully desired to be in the profession perform far better as teachers much later when they are fully employed in the service. This implies that admitting student-teachers who are not interested in the teaching profession may only aggravate the downtrend of education in society since the attitude of such unserious teachers may result in negative tendencies like truancy, and absenteeism in their career performances (Pigge and Marso, (1997).

One could also identify that data analysis from the second research question is a piece of evidence as well as a source of serious concern to all well-meaning citizens of Nigeria about the teaching profession. The teaching profession appears to be a point upon which individuals hold onto while expecting careers that are better rewarded in terms of remunerations. The prestigious place of teaching as a career seems to be fading away. Does the teaching profession



really have a future? This is a question that we must ponder in Nigeria. A situation where due to lack of motivation, and delayed payment of salaries and incentives, the majority of even teachers in the once revered career will not dare to encourage their children to succeed them is an indication that all is not well with the profession. Most lawyers, accountants, and medical doctors would appreciate that their children succeed them. Evidently, most student-teachers have some tendency or apathy about the teaching job. For some, being a teacher means accepting suffocating from economic stress without a future to grow, ready to experience psychological depression, lack of job satisfaction and low self-esteem (Ikiyei, 2006). It appears like most teachers perceive that there are little or no opportunities for career growth, especially at the primary school level. The findings of the study indicated that student-teachers are ashamed of being introduced as future teachers. A feeling of low self-esteem would definitely affect their productivity and learners' output. Negative behaviours such as the above ones certainly may not be in line with the definition of teacher education as expressed by Adewuji and Ogunwuyi (2002) and Okporim and Esu (2019). These authorities assert and see teachers as agents of desirable change. Little wonder, students observed to be exhibiting such arts as truancy, bullying and lack of concentration while learning, may in some instances probably develop these anti-social characteristics by capitalising on their teachers' weaknesses. Those students are largely not adequately monitored by their teachers who themselves have a nonchalant attitude toward their primary responsibilities.

The mean score result of the data analysis clearly indicated that only 2.93 respondents had a positive perception of teaching and the teaching profession while a mean score response of 9.77 had a negative perception concerning teaching and the teaching profession. Imagine that most professionals will appreciate that their children succeed them in their callings like lawyers, medical doctors and accountants. In the case of the teaching profession, the majority of the respondents would rather pray that their children opt for other professions. These results are in line with Ikiyei (2006) where it was identified that teachers have lost their self-esteem due to the poor conditions of service and the perception of society about teachers. It is imperative to note that the situation is worrisome and should be a source of concern to educate policymakers and the government in particular. The study results are an indication of the present brain drain ravaging the teaching profession. Intelligent young men and women who are supposed to be great teachers are opting for either better-paid jobs or frantically exploring means of leaving Nigeria to either other African countries like Ghana and South Africa or other overseas (Western countries) like Canada and Germany where they will not only be well paid but also be appreciated as human beings (respected and their self-esteem earned). A society where educators are not seen to be significant speaks volumes and the hope of the researcher is that this perception will change without delay as no nation can grow above its educational system with teachers as the "arrowhead".

Although the result of Hypothesis 1 is a surprise since it maintained that there are no radical differences as to whether student-teachers with interest and those without interest will remain in the teaching profession. One rational determining factor for students presently may be due to the economic circumstances of the country, Nigeria. The labour market is tough and because of the lack of jobs, young people are forced to accept whatever offer despite the poor treatment they receive. They may see and accept teaching momentarily as a stepping stone. Again, some



of the students might have doubts as to the purpose for which the questionnaires were administered since the researchers are there lecturers from within the Faculty of Education. Some of them may have responded with caution. This result is similar to the study of Henty, Sello and Fiji (2015). The scholars argued that the teaching profession, critically speaking, may not be radically different in status from any other profession such as law, medicine or accountancy. All that is required is for the authorities to improve the work environment of the classroom teachers in order to boost their morale.

CONCLUSIONS

The proper quality upbringing of the child is a collective responsibility of all well-meaning citizens of the society. Teachers and teacher education are instituted to ensure that the younger generation is trained to do exploits as successors of the preceding generation. Teacher training and mentorship is a *sine qua non* of these lofty objectives. Those admitted most times to be prepared as future teachers appear not to be showing real aptitude towards the service of real dedicated teachers, passionate to put their best; it is obvious that only a handful seems to show genuine commitment. The majority of the student-teachers recognise their training as an opportunity to at least acquire university degrees and certificates. This is not a cheering development for a country where there is a serious desire to bring back street or out-of-school children to new learning experiences. A lot of work is needed to be done by all stakeholders. School administrators must as a matter of urgency consider it as a matter of urgency to initiate programmes to rebuild genuine aptitude and interest among students seeking school placements before offering them admission to pursue teacher education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, and to encourage the younger generations to become teachers, coupled with the submission that without teachers, no society could sincerely make progress in future, the few recommendations listed here may be relevant to the development of teacher and teacher education generally, researchers and anyone who may be privileged to read this work might then benefit from these recommendations.

1. Beyond the required academic scores for admission of students into the Faculty of Education; the students' aptitudes for the programs/courses they intend to study should be critically examined by the higher institutions admitting them. This will help in no small nature to check teacher attrition upon qualification for the career.
2. The idea that government alone can fund the educational sector had proven to be less successful, individuals, corporate organisations, religious bodies, non-governmental organisations, etc should join hands in supporting teacher education. It might not be only through monetary incentives but other methods by which they could be encouraged. For instance, deserving teachers could receive awards that will motivate or spur them to work with more commitment and determination.



3. The fact that students who cannot secure admission into other faculties/programmes are drifting into the Faculty of Education should be discouraged. Students admitted to the Faculty of Education should be those with very high mental capacity that is outstanding or that excelled in their scores during the entrance examinations only. Teachers who can not give what they do not have intellectually, need not have any business with teaching or teacher education. When incompetent teachers with a low aptitude for teaching serve as classroom teachers, the pieces of evidence would inevitably be poor achievement outcomes.
4. Teachers' progressive development should be made a top priority by all tiers of government through the award of scholarships and sponsorships. The recent pronouncement by the Federal Minister of Education (Malam Adamu Adamu) that student-teachers in the Faculty of Education will be given some allowances while in training, is commendable and a step in the right direction to encourage the younger generation to opt for the teaching profession. It is hoped that the implementation of this policy would not experience hitches and other corrupt practices.
5. Allowances, salaries and other incentives for teachers in the service should be put into the first-line charge of the various tiers of government (Federal, State and Local Governments). A situation where teachers are owed salaries for many months before being paid as though the teachers are being done a favour is a slight on the teaching profession. This lack of motivation had led to the perception that the teaching profession is not good enough for anyone.
6. As painful as it might sound, teachers who are misfits obviously are creating very challenging issues for the profession at all levels of education. Teachers' character and discipline will help to avert mass failure at both WAEC/NECO examinations, thereby retarding the progress of the students. Subsequently, such teachers should be redeployed to areas where their competence might be required instead of the teaching profession.
7. In order to save the future of the teaching profession from experiencing professional misfits, all hands must be on deck to ensure that the educational sector is adequately supported. It would be near impossible without the educational sector for Nigeria or any other nation globally to secure a safe, peaceful and technological future since development must begin first from the minds of men. Education is a guarantee for security, technological growth and good governance and these variables are the responsibilities of everybody in society. Adequate teacher preparation is the solution for a great and enlightened professional devoted to ensuring the betterment of today's and tomorrow's meaningful population.



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ASSESSMENT OF OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER (OCD) AMONG THE STAFF OF UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

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ABSTRACT: *This study is an assessment of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder among the staff of the University of Benin using a descriptive survey research design. It was aimed at gathering relevant information on the occurrence of OCD among the academic and non-academic staff of the University of Benin. The population of the study included all the academic (188) and non-academic (84) staff in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Nigeria. The sample size for this study was 136 staff in the Faculty of Education. This was done by stratifying the staff into Academic and Non-Academic staff, thereafter simple random sampling was used to select a sample of 50% of the total number of academic and non-academic staff. Data were collected with a structured questionnaire (Questionnaire on Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, QOCD) administered to the sample. Research question 1 was answered using descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation and hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using a t-test of the Independent sample. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level alpha of significance. The findings of the study showed that there is no statistically significant difference in the occurrence of OCD between male and female staff of the University of Benin and also that there is no significant difference in the proportion of academic and non-academic staff with medium to high levels of OCD in the University of Benin, Nigeria.*

KEYWORDS: Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Academic Staff, Non-academic Staff.



INTRODUCTION

Sometimes people are bothered about one thing or the other, for instance when people think about their past failures or when they feel that they are not meeting up with the standard of life. The feeling can also be that of losing someone close or of a genetic ailment and so on. When these thoughts always occur, they can result in obsession. Obsession could lead to depression. Sometimes people with obsession always act in a funny way because they want to behave as if nothing is wrong which could lead to compulsion. Compulsion is the way people behave in order to reduce depression gotten from obsession.

People engaged in compulsion think it can reduce or minimise the obsession, with such thinking, they continue to repeat their compulsions. For example, they check repeatedly that the door they locked is actually locked, they have felt that the clothing they just washed is dirty and so on. Compulsion can reduce depression for a while but it does not reduce it forever. People with OCD tend to do one thing continually, which can lead to a waste of time because what they are supposed to do for an hour can take them several hours and this in return can have a negative effect on their day-to-day activities, this negative effect can lead to reproach, humility and disgrace.

According to WHO (1992), OCD is common in close to 2.5% of the population or 1 individual in 40 is affected this makes it about twice as common as other conditions such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. It is also the fourth most frequent psychiatric disorder; it can be serious and debilitating. WHO regards OCD as one of the top 10 major causes of disability among all medical conditions in the world today.

OCD is an anxiety syndrome that is categorised by irrational thinking and doubts (obsessions) which make someone do things repeatedly (compulsions). Obsession is a situation when someone is always thinking about what can make him worry or be anxious while compulsion is when someone repeatedly does a particular thing in order to minimise worries or anxiety gotten through obsession. This may include checking whether the light is really switched off after one might have actually switched it off or thinking of jumping out of a moving vehicle, cancelling the correct answer provided while writing an examination while thinking it was a wrong one.

OCD is a disorder which involves people having unwanted thoughts, ideas or sensations that occur repeatedly (obsessions) which often makes them feel driven to behave or do something reiteratively (compulsion). It is a mental disorder in which an individual feels the necessity to carry out particular routines repeatedly called compulsions or has particular thoughts repeatedly called obsessions. The individual is incapable of controlling either unwanted thoughts or repetitious activities for a short period of time. OCD is a complicated neurological condition affecting many people.

OCD is a mental illness that involves repeated undesired thoughts or sensations (obsessions) or the urge to do a particular thing over and over again (compulsions). It is not about habits like sneezing or thinking negative thoughts. An obsessive thought may be that a particular number is “good” or “bad”. A compulsive habit might be to clean your hands five times with soap and warm water after touching something that could be dirty. Although it may not be deliberate to do these things the individual, however, finds it difficult to stop it.



Everyone has thoughts or habits they repeat occasionally. Individuals suffering from OCD have thoughts or habits that.

- Take up at least an hour a day
- Are beyond one's control
- Are not enjoyable
- Interfere with work, one's social life or other parts of their life.

OCD is a mental health condition characterised by distressing, instructive, unwanted and repetitive thoughts and compulsive physical or mental habits.

Literature has shown that there exists a discourse on the prevalence of OCD in the population. Geller, et al. (2021) stated that the prevalence of OCD in Africa ranges from 13.3% to 43.1%. In line with this finding, Hasanian (2021) presented that the frequency of probable Obsessive Compulsive Disorder among a sample in a university in Iraq was as high as 43%. Although, this appears to be quite high compared to the results of other researchers which range from 3.8% to 35.8% (Assareh et al 2016; Torres et al 2016; Opakunle et al, 2017).

Previous studies have however varied in their stance as to the occurrence of OCD among males and females (Hasanian, 2012; Torres et al, 2006; Jaisoorya, 2017). Jaisoorya (2017) presented that the prevalence of OCD in a sample of individuals in India was about 3.3% with a higher occurrence in males than females. Although a lot of support the claim that there is no statistically significant difference in the prevalence of OCD among females and males (Opakunle et al, 2017; Assareh et al 2016). Hasanian (2021) stated that even though the percentage of females with OCD in his study appeared to be more than the percentage of males (69.4% vs. 30.6%); however, this difference was not found to be significant.

Salina et al (2021) in a study on burnout and how it relates to psychological distress and job satisfaction among academicians and non-academicians investigated the presence of depression, anxiety and stress among academic and non-academic staff in the University of Technology, Malaysia. They found out that academic staff had higher anxiety, depression and stress than non-academic staff. These conditions are major signs of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder in individuals. This would suggest that among these academic staff would be a higher OCD occurrence than among the non-academic staff. However, Ekechukwu and Isiguzo (2016) presented that the mean difference in the prevalence of stress and its related mental health problems between academic and non-academic staff was statistically insignificant. This suggests that the occurrence of OCD among the teaching and non-teaching staff does not significantly differ.

Howbeit the fact although many persons experience insignificant obsessions (such as worrying about leaving the gas on) and compulsions (such as always double-checking if the gas is locked), these do not usually significantly affect their daily lives. However, for individuals with OCD, the obsessions and compulsions are of significantly higher frequency and intensity, hence having a big impact on how they live their lives. OCD affects the daily life and work of people with the disorder. For instance, repeating compulsions takes up a significant amount of time and they tend to avoid certain situations that trigger the OCD. This can mean that they are not able to attend some seminars or workshops, carry out some given responsibilities or



assignments or spend too much time on projects they are given. Obsessive thoughts make concentration difficult and leave them feeling exhausted. OCD can therefore have a profound effect on the life of people with the disorder as their functioning is significantly impaired in about 50% (Piacentini et al, 2003). Poor concentration is usually common due to distractions caused by intrusive and disconcerting thoughts. Compulsive behaviours also affect the individual's life and work. For instance, repetitions of rituals such as re-reading and re-writing take up the person's time considerably and even reduce the quality of his/her work. OCD could also make a person avoid situations at work that may provoke obsessions. For instance, avoiding at all costs areas they assume to be contaminated, such as public toilets or situations they perceive as dangerous, such as avoiding teaching a large class of students for fear of germs and communicable diseases. In dire cases, an individual may be incapable of going to work all together and prefer to work from home for fear of leaving the house. Also, people with OCD frequently engage in long and complicated rituals, and this may mean that they stay awake late into the night until they have completed their compulsions to their satisfaction. In this case, such persons are likely to be exhausted at work and maybe constantly late or even become socially withdrawn.

Therefore, social interaction at work can also suffer due to OCD. A person that has contamination fears would feel reluctant to be physically near others and would hence be unable to participate in many typical activities of work life; for example, team projects, teaching (for academic staff) or even eating in the school cafeteria. Also, many persons suffering from OCD are embarrassed by their compulsions and rituals and may refrain from any social situation that could provoke them (Grant, 2014). They may feel that they have to hide their OCD from other people especially those close to them or their anxieties and doubts about a relationship could make it quite difficult to even start or continue. When they do engage in their compulsions in the company of others, they may be perceived as socially odd and are likely to be teased or altogether avoided by their colleagues (Opakunle et al, 2017). Hence, they may often feel ashamed or lonely. They feel ashamed of their obsessive thoughts and may worry that they cannot be treated. They might decide to conceal this part of themselves from people around them, so it may be difficult for them to be around other people or go outside making them feel lonely and isolated. This is not only problematic at work as OCD can pose a challenge in forming relationships with family members also.

At home obsessions and compulsions may cause people to become quite irritable in the view of other family members, often leading to increased arguments with family members. They tend to constantly question and seek reassurance from their family members concerning their particular obsessions and compulsions (For example, did you lock the door well? Are those plates clean?). This repetitive reassurance seeking even after been showed that these things have been done can lead to tension and disagreement among the family members. Also, family members could become increasingly involved in their compulsions. They may have to wash and rewash dishes, and place the property of the OCD person in the particular order they desire every single time as moving it slightly out of position could lead to distress.

Genetics, temperament, traumatic life experiences, and even modelling parental behaviour have all been considered as potential causes of the disorder. However, the factors that cause OCD have been categorized into three main categories (Jaisooriya et al, 2017)



- **Biological factors:** Research reveals that OCD could be caused by some biological factors that occur in humans. Research suggests that OCD is associated with challenges in communication between the front region of the brain and other deeper structures. These brain structures use a chemical messenger called serotone. A number of biological theories argue that a shortage of the brain's chemical serotonin may play a role in the development of OCD (Feneske & Petersen, 2015). Images of the human brain at work also show that in some individuals, the brain circuits associated with OCD gradually get normal with either serotone medicines or cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT). However, it's unclear whether this is the cause or an effect of the condition. Other researches show that OCD may be hereditary. According to the International OCD Foundation (2019), OCD runs in families and genes are probably involved in the development of the disorder. However, there has not been sufficient evidence to support this suggestion. Hence it is still unclear the validity of biological factors as causes of OCD.
- **Personal Experiences:** Some studies suggest that OCD is developed as a result of personal experience and that this may appear in several ways. Which could be OCD behaviours learned as a technique for coping with stressful or traumatic experiences probably from parents or guardians with similar anxieties and compulsive behaviour, painful childhood experiences, such as trauma, abuse or bullying. In this case, the individual uses Obsessions and compulsive behaviours as coping mechanisms and in the process develops OCD, ongoing anxiety and stress, or experiences a traumatic event like a motor accident or an illness, which could trigger OCD to worsen it. For some women, pregnancy or birth can trigger prenatal OCD.
- **Personality:** Some research postulates that people with certain personality characteristics may be more probable to have OCD. For instance, individuals that are neat, meticulous, and methodical with high standards, could be more likely to develop OCD.

Obsessive-compulsive disorder can start at any age but the typical age of onset is adolescence or early adulthood and tends to be life-long if left untreated (Rasmussen, & Eisen, 1992; Noshirvani et al, 1991). Childhood-onset is not rare, however, based on the tendency for OCD to begin during the period of young adulthood, a lot of studies have committed to investigating its prevalence among university students who are young adults (Hasanian, 2012; Torres et al, 2006). However, few studies have attempted to investigate this disorder among the staff that work in these universities and are expected to assist these students in their academic journeys. This is what this present study intends to investigate. It seeks to provide information on obsessive-compulsive disorder among university staff.

Statement of the Problem

OCD is ranked the fourth most prevalent psychiatric disorder. It can be very severe and debilitating to all aspects of a person's life; work, family, studies and leisure. In the United States of America, it is estimated that 1 in 100 adults currently have OCD while at least 1 in 200, that is, 500,000 children and teens currently have OCD. Therefore, in a medium-to-large corporation, there could be 4-10 people struggling with the challenges caused by high levels of OCD (Lang, 2009). These statistics are not any different in Nigeria, and Africa as a whole. It has been discovered that the prevalence of OCD in Africa ranges from 13.3% to 43.1% and



90% of affected people do not receive any form of pharmacological or psychological treatment, especially those with mild and moderate symptom severity (Geller, et al. 2021).

So many challenges are faced by workers with OCD which include family distress (Calvocoressi et al, 1995), reduced work efficiency due to poor concentration and ineffective use of time (Piacentini et al, 2003), difficulty in building social relationships and social isolation (Opakunle et al, 2017), depression, anxiety and so on. These, in turn, cause challenges to the university system which relies on the efficiency and productivity of these staff. It, therefore, becomes requisite to investigate this disorder among the university staff so as to furnish the universal body of knowledge on the presence of OCD among university staff in Nigerian universities. Therefore, the goal of this study is to investigate the level of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) among the staff at the University of Benin, Nigeria.

Research Questions

This study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the level of OCD among faculty of education staff at the University of Benin?
2. Is there a significant difference in the number of male and female staff with levels of OCD at the University of Benin?
3. Is there a significant difference in the levels of OCD of academic and non-academic staff at the University of Benin?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the number of male and female staff with levels of OCD at the University of Benin.
2. There is no significant difference in the levels of OCD of academic and non-academic staff at the University of Benin.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design is adopted for the study. This study was conducted among University of Benin staff. The population of the study included all the academic (188) and non-academic (84) staff in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Nigeria. The sample size of the study was 136 staff in the Faculty of Education. This was done by stratifying the staff into Academic and Non-Academic staff, thereafter simple random sampling was used to select a sample of 50% of the total number of academic and non-academic staff. Data were collected with a structured questionnaire (Questionnaire on Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, QOCD) administered to the sample. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: one part contained socio-demographic features and the other part consisted of 20 items. The response options for each item consisted of the scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) which coded from 4-1 respectively. All 20 questionnaire items were used for the assessment of



four aspects of symptoms related to OCD, including checking, contamination, symmetry and ruminations.

All participant staff members were assured of confidentiality as they participated in the questionnaire filling. Research question 1 was answered using descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation and hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using a t-test of Independent statistics. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level alpha of significance.

FINDINGS

Research Question one: What is the level of OCD (checking, contamination, symmetry and order, ruminations and intrusive thoughts) among faculty of education staff at the University of Benin?

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the levels of OCD among University of Benin Staff

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
OCD	136	46.41	7.30

Table 1 shows a mean value of 46.41 and a standard deviation of 7.30. Since the calculated value is greater than the table mean of 2.50, then the level of OCD is high.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for the levels of OCD

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
Checking	136	11.5729	3.53254	High
Contamination	136	10.8125	2.18758	High
Symmetry and ordering	136	14.7083	2.19049	High
Ruminations and intrusive thought	136	9.3229	2.15941	High

Table 2 above shows the mean values of the levels of Checking, Contamination, Symmetry and Ordering, Ruminations and Intrusive thoughts as 11.5729, 10.8125, 14.7083 and 9.3229 respectively and corresponding respective standard deviation values of 3.53254, 2.18758, 2.19049 and 2.19049. Since the calculated values are greater than the table mean of 2.50, then the level of OCD is high. The level of symmetry and order has the highest mean of 14.7083, followed by checking, contamination and rumination and intrusive thoughts.

Hypothesis one: There is no significant difference in the number of male and female staff with levels of OCD at the University of Benin.

**Table 3: t-test of independent difference in levels of OCD between male and female staff**

	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
OCD	Male	76	46.68	7.05	134	.450	.577
	Female	50	46.00	7.75			

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 3 shows a calculated t-value of .450 and p-value of .577, testing at an alpha level of 0.05. Since the p-value is greater than the alpha level, the null hypothesis which states that “there is no significant difference in the number of male and female staff with levels of OCD in the University of Benin” is retained. This implies that there is no significant difference in the levels of OCD between male and female faculty of education staff at the University of Benin.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the levels of OCD of academic and non-academic staff at the University of Benin.

Table 4: t-test of independent difference in levels of OCD between academic and non-academic staff

	Staff	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
OCD	Academic	54	44.61	7.05	134	-2.846	.981
	Non-academic	42	48.73	7.75			

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 4 shows a calculated t value of -2.846 and p-value of .981, testing at an alpha level of 0.05. Since the p-value is greater than the alpha level, the null hypothesis which states that “there is no significant difference in the levels of OCD of academic and non-academic staff in the University of Benin” is retained. This implies that there is no significant difference in the levels of OCD between academic and non-academic Faculty of Education staff at the University of Benin.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study revealed that the level of OCD among the staff of the faculty of education at the university of Benin is high. The study showed that staff shows high levels of checking, contamination, symmetry and ordering and ruminations. The level of symmetry and order was however found to be higher than the others. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Hasanian (2021) which showed that the prevalence of OCD in a university in Iraq was as high as 43%. It is also in concord with the findings of Salina (2021) which showed high levels of anxiety, depression and stress among university staff. However, the study indicated the percentage levels to be 23%, 11% and 5% respectively. These levels are lower than the levels obtained in this study. This could be due to the fact that the current study measures more closely the aspects of OCD rather than the effects such as anxiety.



The findings of the study further revealed that there is no statistically significant difference in the occurrence of OCD between male and female staff of the University of Benin. This is in concordance with the findings of Opakunle et al, 2017; Assareh et al 2016 Noshirvani et al (1991) Hasanian (2021) stated that even though the percentage of females with OCD in his study was obviously higher than the percentage of males (69.4% vs. 30.6%); however, this difference was not found to be significant. The finding, however, stands in disagreement with the findings of Jaisoorya (2017) who found that the prevalence of OCD among a sample of individuals in India was about 3.3% with a higher prevalence in males than females.

The findings of the study also revealed that there is no significant difference in the levels of OCD of academic and non-academic staff with medium to high levels of OCD at the University of Benin. This is in agreement with the findings of Ekechukwu and Isiguzo (2016) whose study showed that the mean difference in the prevalence of stress and its associated mental health problems between academic and non-academic staff was too negligible to be significant. It is, however, in disagreement with the findings of Salina et al (2021) whose findings showed that academic staff had higher anxiety, depression and stress than non-academic staff. This would suggest that they would be more likely to have OCD than their non-academic counterparts. However, the finding of this current study does not support that suggestion. This disparity could be because the previous study focused more on anxiety and stress, while the present study focuses wholly on OCD whose symptoms may include anxiety and stress.

CONCLUSION

OCD is a relatively common anxiety disorder experienced by as many as 3% of individuals at any particular point in time. The disorder is characterized by obsessions and compulsions which cause significant distress, are time-consuming and impact the individual's day-to-day life at work and at home. It is often left undetected and treated as many people are usually embarrassed about their obsessions and compulsions. Notwithstanding, early detection and diagnoses are important for effective treatment. If left untreated, OCD typically persists and can seriously disrupt a person's functioning, and social and family life and negatively impact relationships with peers and future development. School administration can play an important role in a person's adaptation to life with OCD.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Staff especially Counselors can reinforce the message that OCD is a known and treatable problem and in turn encourage staff members of universities to seek professional assessment and treatment. There are also a number of pragmatic ways in which universities can help to minimize the impact of OCD on its workers.
2. It can be helpful to give extra time for the completion of projects as it is well established that compulsions such as ensuring symmetry and order and intrusive thoughts can slow individuals down or impair their concentration. Alternative rooms in which to work or use as convenience could be arranged if particular offices or restrooms trigger obsessions or rituals.



3. Head of Departments and university counsellors to establish ways in which they can support individuals with high levels of OCD in implementing treatment strategies in the classroom. For instance, a person with obsession worries about being contaminated by others may be given the task of coordinating a small group of students on a particular product and being in contact with them, as part of their treatment with permission from the Head of the Department.
4. More sensitization about OCD among staff should be carried out. It is of significant importance that everyone in the university setting, academic, and non-academic staff and students alike, have credible knowledge of what OCD is all about.

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ENTRY QUALIFICATION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF DIRECT ENTRY STUDENTS IN THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *The study investigated direct entry qualification and students' academic achievement in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin. The study was aimed at ascertaining a difference in the academic achievement of Direct Entry students with different entry qualifications such as NCE, OND and those with JUPEB entry. Seven research questions were raised and six research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. This study employed the ex-post facto research design. The total population was 164 direct entry students of the 2018/2019 academic session students' folders. The population sample for this study was made up of all 164, a proforma was used for data collection. The proforma named, Students Record Profile Form which contained the classification of 300 Level students in the 2019/2020 academic session based on their direct entry qualification (JUPEB, NCE AND OND), their sex and their corresponding standardized scores in the faculty courses (EDU 311, EDU 321, EDU 312 and EDU 322) examinations held in the 2019/2020 academic session. The scores were standardized using the z-score and t-score statistics. Data obtained was analysed using descriptive statistics (mean, frequency tables and percentages) to answer research question one while research questions two to six were hypothesised. Null hypotheses one to three and five were tested with the Independent Samples T-test, and the fourth and sixth null hypothesis was tested with a Two-way Analysis of Variance at 0.05 level of significance adopting SPSS Version 21. Based on the finding of the study, it was concluded that there is a significant difference in the academic achievement of direct-entry students with respect to their entry qualifications. A recommendation was made that students with certificate entry qualifications need monitoring and mentoring to ensure better academic performance.*

KEYWORDS: Entry Qualification, Direct Entry and Academic Achievement



INTRODUCTION

University education in Nigeria is one of the paramount academic platforms that many seek to reach. Despite the increasing number of universities in Nigeria, there is an even greater increase in the number of applicants to the universities each year (Isikeh, 2019). This plethora of available candidates makes the selection of quality candidates into institutions quite tedious. This is sadly accompanied by an observed poor performance of university students (Aremu, 2000; Adeosun, 2017; Oshodi et al., 2018) As a result of this, several schemes have been put in place to manage the plethora of applicants to these universities while attempting to maintain the selection of quality students who will perform well in the university. So there is an observable shift in the way students are being admitted into universities; from the immediate post-colonial era when universities were left to set their own admission standards under the National Universities Commission (NUC) to the formation of the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB).

In 1978 JAMB was established by the federal government to regulate and essentially harmonize admission processes in universities. This the board did through an entrance exam called the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME). Over time, however, there were increasing concerns about the credibility of JAMB's standards and processes and the board faced criticism.

This problem, together with the issue of too many applicants vying for limited spaces in universities led to more investigations into other means of admitting students into the university, specifically the direct entry mode which appears to provide an opportunity to students who fall below the standard for admission to improve their academic experience. A student whose UTME score is not up to the cut-off mark for the university and who is applying for limited slots in a particular course of choice may decide to instead enrol in a Polytechnic or college of education or a foundation program with his UTME score and then after successful completion of the polytechnic, college of education or foundation program will move forward to apply again to the university, but this time with an enriched educational experience.

Although JAMB and UTME are still very functional today and universities are mandated to factor in UTME in their candidate selection process, Universities have adopted this other mode to deal with a large number of yearly applicants, while also ensuring quality students are being selected for admission. However, embedded in this mode, are various entry qualifications. All these different entry qualifications represent different academic experiences and histories and could possibly represent the different academic achievements of students in universities. This is no different in the University of Benin which is unofficially regarded as one of the "Ivy League" schools of Nigeria.

The University of Benin since its inception in 1970 has always attracted a relatively large number of applicants yearly. In the 2018/2019 academic session, about 75,000 students applied to the university with about 1000 applying to the faculty of Education (Isikeh, 2019). This puts the faculty and the entire University at one of the most confronted with this issue of admitting quality students out of the many available applicants. The faculty of Education at the University of Benin allows three main qualifications for direct entry admission. These are the pre-degree programme qualification coordinated by the Joint Universities Preliminary Examinations Board (JUPEB), the National Certificate in Education (NCE) by Students who have completely



attended colleges of Education and the Ordinary National Diploma (OND) by polytechnic students.

The Pre-degree Programme by JUPEB consists of a minimum of one year of approved courses run separately in various universities' foundation programmes and an entrance exam conducted by the board based on which successful candidates are then given direct entry admissions into university courses at the 200-level. The NCE programme on the other hand involves a three-year course in an approved college of education after which a certificate is issued to the student with which they can apply as candidates for provisional direct entry admission into courses in the faculty of education at 200 Level. Lastly, the OND is the certificate given to polytechnic graduates for the first two years of a National Diploma Course which they can also use to apply for admission into the faculty at 200-Level. All three groups of students highlighted above have different academic experiences hence the difference in their entry qualifications into the faculty. The importance of these modes of entry lies in the fact that they are the basis on which candidates are selected for the faculty.

According to Adeyemi (2009), academic achievement means a measure of students' activities through examination within the context of a curriculum. That is, how an individual is able to demonstrate his or her intellectual abilities often observed through the individual's score in an examination. Hence, academic achievement refers to a measure of how well students have performed in the various assessment items set before them based on some criteria determined by professional educators. In assessing the academic achievement of students, a number of factors have been investigated which include university data such as semester GPA (Ahmed et al 2015), socioeconomic status (Mohamed & Waguih, 2017), student environment (Mueen et al 2016) and others. Among these factors, prior academic achievement which is defined by (Alyahyan & Dustegor (2020) as the historical baggage of students and student demographic data such as sex and age have been recognised as two very important factors that impact the prediction of students' academic performance.

Adeniyi (2003) and Ipaye (2004) as cited by Olajide et al (2015) reported that DE students were superior to their university matriculation examination counterparts in academic achievement. Stating further that DE students, specifically NCE students have a more relevant knowledge base on which their university academic experiences are built. NCE students especially in the Faculty of Education have a strong foundation on their relevant courses enriched by their college of education programme. This gives them an edge when they get into the university and so could make them perform better than their UTME or OND counterparts. This is reiterated by Olaoluniyi et al (2013) whose study indicated that students with NCE certificates performed better vis-a-vis their other counterparts in the faculty of education. Kpolovie et al (2014) whose findings stated that students who did a one-year preliminary programme performed better than their counterparts, however, disagree with the previous claim. He suggested that this may be due to their familiarisation with the environment, standards and processes of the university they are admitted to while those admitted through the NCE and OND are not opportune to be acquainted with the university in the same way.

One evident disparity is that all these studies despite the apparent difference in the educational experiences of National Certificate in Education holders, Ordinary National Degree holders and JUPEB pre-degree students, treated the various qualifications of direct entry as one unit, which makes it unclear as to the exact qualification or qualifications of direct entry that contributes more (or less) to the good academic performance of students. Notwithstanding, one



effective way to investigate the effectiveness of each direct entry qualification is to examine the academic achievement of the admitted students while in the university.

Over several discourses in education, arguments have been made regarding the extent to which sex influences the academic achievement of students in various courses in tertiary institutions. Several studies have hence supported that this factor has an impact on the academic achievement of students (Prewitt 2001; Okediran & Danesty, 2002; Akinade, 2010). While Akinade (2010) and Levin (2011) presented that the academic performance of male and female students do not have any statistically significant difference. Abimbola (2015) and Akinoso et al (2016) on the other hand, showed that female students outperformed their respective male counterparts. In light of the many other factors that could be used to access the academic achievement of university students, the focus of this present study is to investigate different direct entry qualifications for admission into the faculty of education at the University of Benin and their effect on students' academic achievement.

Statement of the Problem

The continuously increasing number of university applicants yearly as against the limited number of available universities has become a case of concern. However, the poor performance of university students is of more dire concern. Various researchers have argued that the quality of students admitted into these universities is a contributive factor to this predicament with several researchers positing that Direct Entry students perform better academically (Adeniyi, 2014; Ipaye, 2004; Kpolovie et al 2014; Adeyemi (2009). This would suggest that the admission process should focus more on selecting students with direct entry qualifications. However, there remains a gap as to which Direct Entry qualification is actually most desirable. That is, which category of Direct Entry students actually perform better based on Direct Entry qualification? With various Direct Entry qualifications for admission obtainable nowadays, the search for the most efficient qualification that could help in selecting candidates of good quality for admission into universities becomes a problem on its own.

This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the various direct entry qualifications for admission and the academic achievement of three hundred level education students at the University of Benin.

Research Questions

In addressing the problem, the following research questions would be answered.

1. what percentage of DE students who have above-average achievement in the 300-level faculty courses of the 1019/2020 academic session belong to JUPEB, NCE and OND categories respectively?
2. Is there a significant difference in the mean score of direct entry students admitted into the University of Benin irrespective of their qualifications (JUPEB, NCE and OND) in 300 level faculty courses examination of the 2019/2020 academic session?
3. Is there a significant difference in the mean score of male and female direct entry students in 300 level faculty courses examination of the 2019/2020 academic session?



Hypotheses

Research questions 2 to 4 were hypothesized as follows:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean score of direct entry students admitted into the University of Benin irrespective of their qualifications (JUPEB, NCE and OND) in the 300-level faculty courses examination of the 2019/2020 academic session.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female direct entry students in the 300-level faculty courses examination of the 2019/2020 academic session.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the ex-post facto research design. This design was adopted because the researcher has no control over the variables of the study. That is, the researcher does not manipulate the number or kind of students assigned to each direct entry qualification and their corresponding scores, rather the students are already classified into their various direct entry qualifications. The population for the study consists of all 164 three hundred level direct entry students of the 2019/2020 academic session admitted through JUPEB, NCE and OND direct entry qualifications in the faculty of Education, University of Benin. The sampling technique adopted for this study is the census sampling technique. This technique is being adopted because the number of direct entry students at the 300 Level in the faculty of education at the University of Nigeria is quite limited. It is hereby necessary to include all of them in the study.

The instrument for data collection is a Proforma named, Students Record Profile Form which contained the classification of 300 Level students in the 2019/2020 academic session based on their direct entry qualification (JUPEB, NCE AND OND), their sex and their corresponding standardised scores in the faculty courses (EDU 311, EDU 321, EDU 312 and EDU 322) examinations held in the 2019/2020 academic session. The scores were then standardized using the z-score and t-score statistics. The instrument for this study is a Proforma (Student Record Profile) which contained the list, including the sex of direct entry (JUPEB, NCE and OND) students in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin for the 2018/2020 academic session who should be in 300 Level in the 2019/2020 academic session and the corresponding scores of these direct entry (JUPEB, NCE and OND) students in EDU 311, EDU 321, EDU 312 and EDU322 examinations held in 2019/2020 academic session. Data obtained was analysed using descriptive statistics (mean, frequency tables and percentages) to answer research question one while research questions two to four were hypothesised. Null hypothesis one was tested using a one-way Analysis of Variance statistics, hypothesis two was tested using the Independent Samples T-test, and the third null hypothesis was tested with a Two-way Analysis of Variance at a 0.05 level of significance adopting SPSS Version 21.



FINDINGS

Research Question One: What percentage of Direct entry students who have above-average achievement scores in the 300-level faculty courses of the 1019/2020 academic session belong to JUPEB, NCE and OND categories respectively?

Table 1: Frequency Count of Students with Scores above Average

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
JUPEB	55	59.14	59.14
NCE	32	34.41	34.41
OND	6	6.45	6.45
Total	93	100.0	100.0

Table 1 above shows the frequency count of students who scored above average in the faculty courses of the 2019/2020 academic session in faculty of education of the University of Benin. Out of the 154 direct entry students used for analysis, 93 students scored above the average of which 55 were JUPEB, 32 NCE and 6 OND students respectively. Students with JUPEB entry constituted 59.14 per cent of the total number of students who scored above average, while, NCE and OND students constituted 34.41 and 6.45 per cent respectively. Students with JUPEB have the highest per cent mean score of 59.14; followed by students with NCE with per cent mean score of 34.41 and students with OND with per cent mean score of 6.45. This implies that students from the three categories of entry qualification were all represented in the distribution of achievement scores above average.

Hypothesis one: There is no significant difference in the mean score of direct entry students admitted into the University of Benin irrespective of their qualifications (JUPEB, NCE and OND) in 300 level faculty courses examination of the 2019/2020 academic session.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Direct entry qualification by academic achievement

Qualification	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
JUPEB	109	48.21	8.376
NCE	35	54.33	6.851
OND	10	52.95	6.112
Total	154	49.91	8.324

Table 2 above shows a mean and standard deviation of qualifications as 48.21 and 8.376; 54.33 and 6.851 and 52.95 and 6.112 respectively for JUPEB, NCE and OND qualifications. The students with NCE qualifications have the highest mean performance.

**Table 3: ANOVA of Direct entry qualification by Academic Achievement**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups	1092.083	2	546.041	8.671	.000	Significant
Within Groups	9509.177	151	62.975			
Total	10601.260	153				

$\alpha = .05$

Table 3 above shows an F value of 8.671 and a P value of .000 testing at an alpha level of .05 the p-value is less than the alpha level, so, the null hypothesis states that “There is no significant difference in the mean score of direct entry students admitted into the University of Benin with JUPEB, NCE and OND qualifications in 300 level faculty courses examination of 2019/2020 academic session” is rejected. Consequently, there is a significant difference in the mean score of direct entry students admitted into the University of Benin with JUPEB, NCE and OND qualifications in 300 level faculty courses examination of the 2019/2020 academic session.

Table 4: Least Significant Difference LSD Multiple Comparisons of Direct entry Qualification by Academic achievement

	(I)QUALIFICATION	(J) QUALIFICATION	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
LSD	JUPEB	NCE	-6.122*	1.542	.000
		OND	-4.744	2.622	.072
	NCE	JUPEB	6.122*	1.542	.000
		OND	1.379	2.845	.629
	OND	JUPEB	4.744	2.622	.072
		NCE	-1.379	2.845	.629

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4 above shows the mean difference between the achievement of NCE and OND as 2.845 and a p-value of .629; between JUPEB and OND as -4.744 and a p-value of .072. Testing at an alpha level of 0.05. These comparisons are not significantly different since the p-values are greater than .05. However, the table shows a mean difference between JUPEB and NCE as -6.122 and a p-level of .000 since the p-value is less than .05, there is a significant difference between JUPEB, NCE and OND direct entry qualification.

Hypothesis two: There is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female direct entry students in 300 level faculty courses examination of the 2019/2020 academic session.

**Table 5: Independent t-test of difference in Academic Achievement by Sex**

	SEX	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remark
Average score	MALE	46	48.29	9.854	-1.576	.117	Not significant
	FEMALE	108	50.59	7.526			

Table 5 above shows a t-value of -1.576 and a p-value of .117. Testing at an alpha level of 0.05. The p-value is greater than the alpha value hence the null hypothesis that says “There is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female direct entry students in 300 level faculty courses examination of 2019/2020 academic session” is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female direct entry students in 300 level faculty courses examination of the 2019/2020 academic session.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of this study revealed a statistically significant difference in the mean achievement of JUPEB, NCE and OND students with the NCE students outperforming their JUPEB and OND counterparts. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Olaoluniyi et al (2013) whose study indicated that students with NCE certificates performed better than all their other counterparts in the faculty of education. This, he opined, is based on their three years of educational experiences in the field of education. This study is also in line with the findings of Adeyemi (2009) and Akinoso et al (2016) who opined that NCE students have a more relevant knowledge base on which their university academic experiences are built. NCE students especially in the Faculty of Education have a strong foundation on their relevant courses enriched by their college of education programme. This gives them an edge when they get into the university and so could make them perform better than their UTME or OND counterparts.

The findings of this study are however in discord with the findings of Kpolovie et al (2014) whose findings stated that students who did a one-year preliminary programme performed better than their counterparts. He opined that this may be due to their familiarization with the environment, standards and processes of the university they are admitted to while those admitted through the NCE and OND do not have the opportunity to be acquainted with the university in the same way. The divergent results from the present study may be attributed to some reasons: while the previous study used university graduates' CGPAs, the present one used undergraduates' results. Also, Kpolovie et al (2014) conducted their studies using various faculties in the university including the Faculty of Engineering, Humanities, Agricultural Sciences, Social Sciences and Health Sciences administration students while the present work was conducted using the Faculty of Education undergraduates.

The study also shows that the academic achievement of Direct Entry students did not significantly differ based on their sex. This finding agrees with that of Akinade (2010) and Levin (2011) who found that the academic performance of male and female students does not have any statistically significant difference. However, this finding disagrees with the findings of Abimbola (2015) and Akinoso et al (2016) whose study showed female students



outperforming their respective male counterparts. This disparity might be because the previous study focused only on architecture students, while the current study is focused on students in the faculty of education.

CONCLUSION

Based on the finding of the study it was concluded that students' academic achievement differs on the basis of their entry qualifications in the faculty of education, the university of Benin and the NCE students outperform their Direct Entry counterparts.

Another conclusion emanating from this study is that there is no statistically significant difference in the performance of female direct-entry education students in comparison to their male counterparts. This study is not conclusive and as such, the need for more studies to identify the real factors affecting academic achievement of direct-entry education students cannot be over-emphasised, considering the pivotal role it plays in the training of teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The JUPEB Programme and NCE and OND ratio for admission of students into bachelor degree programmes should be reviewed upwards in favour of the NCE Qualification.
2. Students from JUPEB and OND entry qualifications need guidance and monitoring to guarantee better academic performance. A special bridging program can be conducted for all new students to improve their performance.
3. Male and female students should not be taught or admitted with any preconceived disparity between them.
4. In the admission of students into degree programmes in the Faculty of Education, priority and more opportunity should be given to candidates who passed possess the NCE qualification than those who possess OND qualification or JUPEB students.
5. The current admission policy should also be reviewed in favour of students with NCE qualifications.



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ENHANCING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ECOLITERACY THROUGH CONCEPT MAPPING INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT: *Lives on earth solely depend on the environment for food, shelter and production of the next generation. Ecologically literate society ensures the sustainability of a healthy environment for future generations. This study aimed at enhancing the ecoliteracy of university students through concept mapping. To achieve that, four research questions and hypotheses were answered and tested respectively. Quasi-experimental design, involving experimental and control groups, was employed. 210 students were selected from four programmes in the two universities in Sokoto State, Nigeria using convenient and random sampling techniques. The ecological knowledge and Thinking Test was used for data collection. The statistical tool used for data analysis was independent t-test. The study found that both concept mapping and lecture methods enhanced students' ecological knowledge, but concept maps enhanced students' critical thinking more than lecture methods. Thus, the study recommends the use of concept mapping during ecoliteracy training designed to promote ecological critical thinking.*

KEYWORDS: Ecoliteracy; Concept Mapping; University Students.



INTRODUCTION

Environment is the most pivotal component of the universe which provides man with all the necessary materials needed for his survival and his lineage. Man depends on the environment for food, shelter, oxygen, etc.; yet, he destroys the environment. His remarkable development in science and technology, coupled with high population growth and the frequent exploration of natural resources are resulting in several environmental issues such as erosion, drought, climate change, increase in environmental temperature, etc. These affect every continent and country in the world and have been profoundly explained in the existing literature. Dan (2019) reported that the Sahel region of Africa is the most affected part of the world in the dwindling of natural resources. In Nigeria, the major causes of these environmental issues or problems have been identified as urbanization, overpopulation, deforestation, desertification and pollution (Isife, 2012). Therefore, improving the environment is the responsibility of all members of the society, including educational institutions, teachers and students.

There has been an increasing concern over ecological literacy in society. Literature on ecological literacy emphasizes the role of critical thinking in identifying cause-effect relationships in socio-environmental systems, in order to allow more enlightened decision-making (Lewinsohn et al., 2014). Ecoliteracy is meant to enable conscious citizens to make informed decisions and take action on environmental issues (Cid & Pouyat, 2013). The term ecoliteracy was first coined by Capra in 1997, and was defined as an understanding of the principles of the organization of ecosystems and the application of those principles for creating sustainable human communities and societies (McBride et al., 2013). The idea of using natural resources to ensure future availability is central to ecoliteracy. It is used synonymously with ecological literacy and environmental literacy because it is believed to have evolved from the two concepts that were used in relation to creating environmental awareness. Locke, Russo and Mantoyo (2013) believed that ecoliteracy is thus defined as not only the ability to identify, classify, and name different aspects of the environment, but includes the ability to take action and participate in the decision-making process of environmental problems and issues. It also relates to the understanding of ecological relationships and interactions and the long term impact of human activities on the environment (Locke, Russo & Mantoyo, 2013). The relationship between man and his environment is of paramount importance to his survival individually, or within communities and societies. Therefore, to maintain this relationship, man needs to know and understand the environment and how it functions and supports life (Capra, in Sheryn, Christopher, & Paul 2017). According to Roth in Locke, Russo and Mantoyo (2013), ecoliteracy revolves around acquisition of ecological knowledge, evaluating the knowledge and using the knowledge to take actions on different ecological issues. Furthermore, Okur-Berberoglu (2018) identified ecological intelligence among the subsets of ecoliteracy; according to him, it relates to people's awareness to think critically about their environment.

Considering the importance of ecoliteracy and the need for ecologically literate society, the Nigerian government through the National University Commission, introduced a general and compulsory course titled Environmental Education and Sustainable Development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). The objective of the course among others is to provide every person with opportunities to acquire knowledge, values, attitudes, commitment, and skills needed to protect and improve the environment for sustainable development. One common problem associated with most university campuses in Sokoto State is poor waste management especially in and around students' hostel which often results in the pollution of the hostel environment and blockage of drainages. This may make someone to wonder if members of the university



community are actually ecologically literate considering their exposure to learning experience relating to ecological management and environmental protection, hence the need to investigate the reason for these problems with a view to solving them.

The dominant method of instruction used in Nigerian universities is the lecture method. Evidence from educational research revealed that this method affects attention, motivation and low academic performance of the learner (Snezana, Gudevab, & Djokicb, 2011). Consequent upon this and the availability of new instructional strategies such as concept mapping which were found to be effective in promoting meaningful learning, students understanding, there is the need to investigate its effect in promoting ecoliteracy among university students.

Concept mapping is one of the 20th century learning strategies developed by American science educator Joseph D. Novak in the 1970s. It was developed as a means of representing the emerging science knowledge of students. Concept mapping involves arranging concepts hierarchically with the most general, most inclusive concept at the top and the most specific, least general concepts toward the bottom, with cross-links showing relationships between concepts in two different areas of the map usually with short phrases (Novak & Cañas, 2006). This tool has now become a powerful knowledge representation tool useful not only in education but in virtually every sector of human activity (Novak & Canas, 2014). Jinchao (2004) held that concept mapping is very helpful for teachers and students to generate and communicate complex ideas, integrate new and old knowledge, design a complex structure and assess understanding or diagnose misunderstanding. He added that the strategy can be used in the teaching of the ecosystem concept and the relationships between organisms, environment and human beings, because it helps the students to understand the concepts and principles of their discipline and apply the knowledge to all aspects of their life. It is therefore the interest of this research to investigate the effectiveness of this method on enhancing students' ecoliteracy.

Research Questions

The main objective of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of concept mapping in improving university students' ecoliteracy. In an attempt to achieve this objective, the study answered raised the following research questions:

1. Is there any difference between the ecological knowledge of university students exposed to Concept mapping and those with Conventional Method in Sokoto State, Nigeria?
2. Is there any difference between ecological thinking university students exposed to Concept mapping and those with Conventional Method in Sokoto State, Nigeria?
3. Is there any difference between ecological knowledge of male and female university students when exposed to Concept mapping in Sokoto State, Nigeria?
4. Is there any difference between ecological thinking of male and female university students when exposed to Concept mapping in Sokoto State, Nigeria?



Null Hypotheses

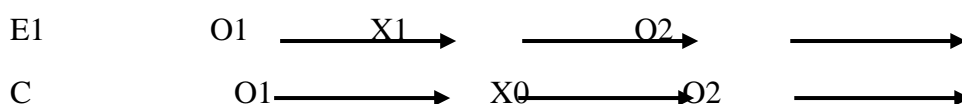
Based on the research questions raised for this study, the following hypotheses were put forward with a view to testing them:

1. There is no significant difference between the ecological knowledge of university students exposed to Concept mapping and those with Conventional Method in Sokoto State, Nigeria
2. There is no significant difference between ecological thinking of university students exposed to Concept mapping and those with Conventional Method in Sokoto State, Nigeria
3. There is no significant difference between ecological knowledge of male and female university students when exposed to Concept mapping in Sokoto State, Nigeria
4. There is no significant difference between ecological thinking of male and female university students when exposed to Concept mapping in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design

This study embraces quasi-experimental design involving experimental and control groups. It is characterized by the administration of pretest and posttest to both groups, administration of treatment to the experimental group and sometimes to the control group, and nonrandom assignment of subjects into experimental and control groups. The design for this study is briefly illustrated as follows:



where:

E = Experimental group

C = Control Group

X1 = Concept Mapping Instruction

X0 = Lecture Method of Teaching

O1 = Pretest

O2 = Posttest



Participants

The population for this study consists of all 300 level students from the two Universities in Sokoto state, namely: Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto and Sokoto State University, Sokoto. The two universities are located at two different local governments: Wamakko and Bodinga respectively. The students were targeted because it is believed that they took a course titled “Environment and Sustainable Development” at 200 level; thus, the ecological knowledge is assumed to be fresh in their memory.

The sample size of 210 was determined using the G power sample size calculator after identifying the independent t-test as an appropriate statistical tool for data analysis at 0.05 significance level. The sampling procedures used in this study are multistage sampling and convenient sampling techniques. In order to have appropriate samples, two faculties were selected randomly in each university. In each faculty, students from one department or programme were selected and used as an experimental group and control group. To ensure gender balance, convenient sampling was used to select departments or programmes with even gender distribution among students. Later, students in one university were assigned to the experimental group while those in the second university were assigned to the control group. This was done after folded papers labeled experimental and control were selected for each university by a primary school aged child who had no idea of the purpose and intention of the study.

Instrumentation

Two instruments/materials were developed and used in this research. The first was the Concept Mapping Guide used as a treatment material for the students in the experimental group; the second titled Ecological Knowledge and Thinking Test was used for data collection. In designing Concept Mapping Guide, several concept maps describing the content of selected topics were designed using Microsoft VISIO application. Prior to that, an account was created with the cmap tool (website with templates of concept maps). Templates of concept maps were studied before designing various concept maps illustrating contents of various ecological topics selected for this research. The maps highlighted some concepts, relationships, hierarchy, with cross links, prepositions, and specific examples where necessary. The Ecological Knowledge and Thinking Test was designed to assess the level of ecological knowledge and thinking of the respondents. It was a multiple choice test consisting of 30 items based on the content of the topics treated during the ecoliteracy training with the participants in the two universities where this study was conducted. It was divided into two sections (A and B). Section A comprised 15 questions which aimed to identify ecological knowledge of the respondents; such questions requested the respondents to recall, recognize and identify ecological concepts, phenomenon and issues. Items in Section B were equally 15 in number; they were set to measure the level of participants ecological thinking; such questions requested the participants to analyze and evaluate typical ecosystems such as ponds, rivers, farmlands and their immediate environments, to relate the impact of human activities on nature and environmental challenges like pollution, global warming, climate change, loss of biodiversity etc.

The content validity of EKTT was ascertained through a table of specification and expert face validation. Firstly, a table of specification was developed to ensure that all questions were within the content of the topics taught during training and were in line with the objectives set for each topic. Secondly, 50 items EKTT test together with the table of specification were



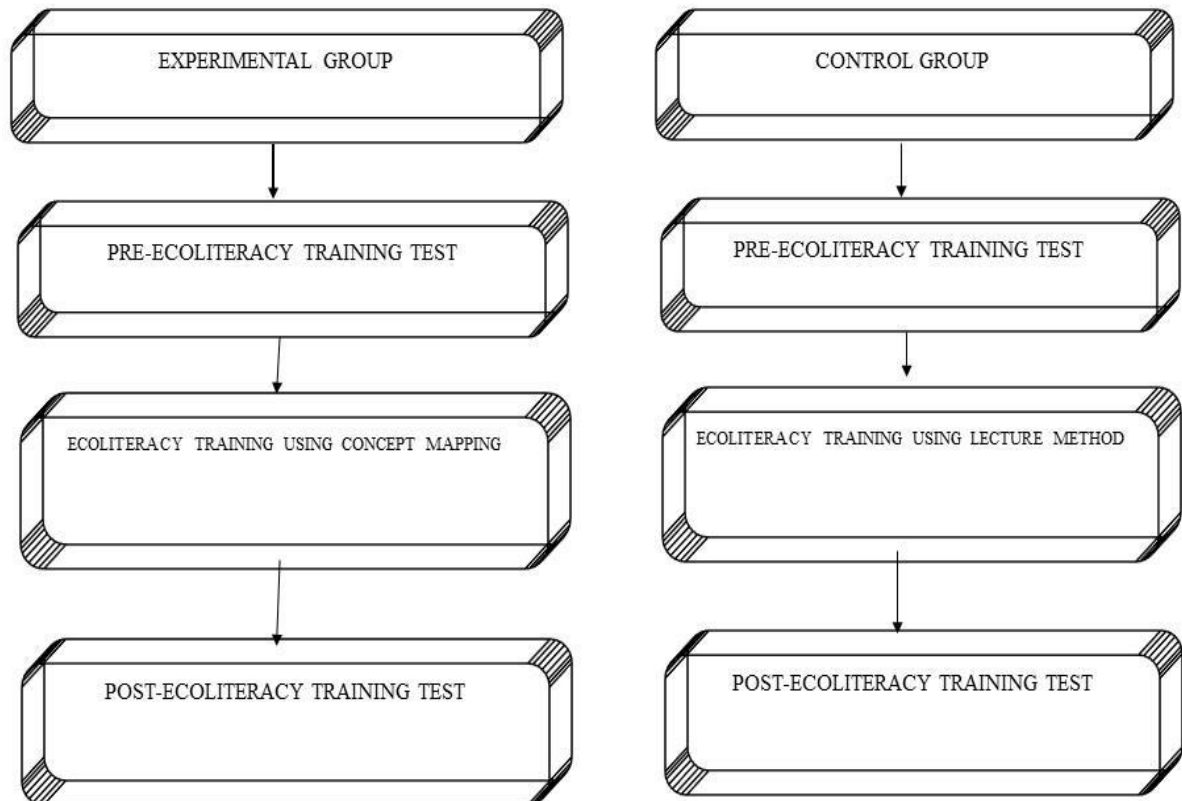
presented to the test and measurement experts and experienced biology environmental educators for face validation. Furthermore, a Research Instrument Validation Form was also administered to the validators, to report their assessment and comments about the instrument. The use of simple language, reducing the number of questions, modification of some questions and sufficient instructions are among the observations raised during face validation. All corrections and observations were effected before pilot study to ascertain the reliability of the instrument.

The reliability index of EKTT was ascertained after pilot study; 20 students were voluntarily selected at Sokoto State University and a test-retest method of estimating reliability was used. The scores of the first test were compared with those of the second test by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation with the help of SPSS statistical software and a coefficient of 0.68.

Method of Data Collection

This study used two groups of subjects which were an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group was given ecoliteracy training using Concept Mapping learning strategy. The control group were given the same training using conventional lecture methods. The first activity carried was the pre-ecoliteracy training exercise. During this period, the researchers and four assistant researchers engaged in venue and students' preparation as well as administration of Ecological Knowledge and Thinking Test as pre-test to all students in the two groups. The second activity was one week of ecoliteracy training. During this period, both groups were exposed to various ecological concepts, issues, principles and challenges. A week later, another EKTT was re-administered to all students in the two groups as post-test.

Figure 2: Experimental Procedure



Method of Data Analysis

The statistical tools used for data analyses in this research include both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics involving simple percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to answer all research questions raised in this study. The inferential statistics employed for testing the null hypotheses formulated in this study was independent sample t-test at 0.05 level of significance. All the data analyses were carried out using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software.



RESULTS

Data obtained from the EKTT were presented in four tables (Table 1-4). Each table shows the data for one research question and corresponding hypothesis. For instance, Table 1 for Research Question 1 and Hypothesis 1, Table 2 for Research Question 2 and Hypothesis 2, and so on.

Table 1: Descriptive statistic and t-test result of students' ecological knowledge

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	P-Value
Experimental Group	105	10.78	1.44	0.34	1.60	0.11
Control Group	105	10.44	1.64			

Source: Field work (2022)

$$\alpha = 0.05$$

Table 1 above shows the descriptive statistics and t-test result of students' post-test scores from the section A of the EKTT which measured their ecological knowledge after going through ecoliteracy training. The results revealed that students in the experimental group who were trained using concept mapping instructional strategy have a score 10.78 and standard deviation 1.44. On the other hand, students in the control group who received ecoliteracy training using the lecture method of instruction have a mean score 10.44 and standard deviation 1.64. Thus, the mean difference between the two groups is 0.34 in favor of students in the experimental group. This answered research question one which sought for the difference between the ecological knowledge of university students exposed to Concept mapping and those with the lecture method in Sokoto State, Nigeria. Furthermore, the table shows that the p-value (0.11) is greater than the alpha value (0.05) set for this research, and the t-value (1.60) is less than the critical value (1.97) at 0.05 alpha value, estimated by G-power calculator in Figure 1. This means both the t-test and alpha value on Table 1 above indicated that the mean difference (0.34) between the two groups is not significant. Consequently, hypothesis one which states that, "there is no significant difference between the ecological knowledge of university students exposed to Concept mapping and those with Conventional Method in Sokoto State, Nigeria" was retained.

Table 2: Descriptive statistic and t-test result of students' ecological critical thinking

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	P-Value
Experimental Group	105	11.87	1.61	2.59	12.26	0.00
Control Group	105	9.28	1.44			

Source: Field work (2022)

$$\alpha = 0.05$$



Data on Table 2 above shows the descriptive statistics and t-test result of students' post-test scores from the section B of the EKTT which measured their ecological critical thinking. The results revealed that students in the experimental group who were trained using concept mapping instructional strategy have a score and standard deviation 11.87 and 1.61 respectively, while those students in the control group who received ecoliteracy training using lecture method of instruction have a mean score and standard deviation 9.28 and 1.44 respectively. The mean difference between the two groups is 2.59 in favor of students in the experimental group. This answered research question two which sought for the difference between ecological thinking among university students exposed to Concept mapping and those with the lecture method in Sokoto State, Nigeria. Furthermore, the analysis on the table shows that the p-value (0.00) is less than the alpha value (0.05) set for this research, and the t-value (12.26) is greater than the critical value (1.97) at 0.05 alpha value estimated by G-power calculator in Figure 1. This means both the t-test and alpha value on Table 2 indicated that the mean difference (2.59) between the two groups is significant. Consequently, hypothesis two which states that "there is no significant difference between the ecological critical thinking of university students exposed to Concept mapping and those with Conventional Method in Sokoto State, Nigeria" was rejected.

Table 3: Descriptive statistic and t-test result of concept mapping and gender on ecological knowledge

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	P-Value
Male	59	10.61	1.35	0.39	-1.36	0.17
Female	46	11.00	1.53			

Source: Field work (2022)

$$\alpha = 0.05$$

The summary of descriptive statistics and t-test results presented in Table 3 shows that male students trained using Concept Mapping have a mean score of 10.61 and standard deviation of 1.31, while female students trained using similar methods have a mean score 11.0 and standard deviation 1.53. The mean difference between the two groups (0.39) suggested that female students have a slightly better ecological knowledge than male students. Consequently, it provides an answer to research question 3 which sought for the difference between ecological knowledge of male and female university students when exposed to Concept mapping in Sokoto State, Nigeria. Furthermore, the table shows that the p-value (0.17) is higher than the alpha value (0.05) set for this research, and the t-value (-1.36) is less than the critical value (1.97) at 0.05 alpha value estimated by G-power calculator in Figure 1. This means both the t-test and alpha value on the table indicated that the mean difference (0.39) between the two groups is not significant. Consequently, hypothesis three which states that, "there is no significant difference between ecological knowledge of male and female university students when exposed to Concept mapping in Sokoto State, Nigeria" was retained.



Table 4: Descriptive statistic and t-test result of concept mapping and gender on ecological thinking

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	t-value	P-Value
Male	59	11.76	1.68	0.24	-1.13	0.26
Female	46	12.00	1.51			

Source: Field work (2022)

$$\alpha = 0.05$$

The descriptive statistics and t-test result summary presented in Table 4 show that male students trained using Concept Mapping have a mean score of 11.68 and standard deviation of 1.68, while female students trained using similar methods have a mean score of 12.0 and a standard deviation of 1.51. The mean difference between the two groups (0.24) suggested that female students' ecological thinking is slightly better than that of male students. Consequently, it answered research question 4 which sought for the difference between ecological thinking of male and female university students when exposed to Concept mapping in Sokoto State, Nigeria. Furthermore, the table shows that the p-value (0.26) is higher than alpha value (0.05) set for this research, and the t-value (-1.13) is less than the critical value (1.97) at 0.05 alpha value estimated by G-power calculator in Figure 1. This means both the t-test and alpha value on Table 4 indicated that the mean difference (0.24) between the two groups is not significant. Consequently, hypothesis four which states that, "there is no significant difference between ecological thinking of male and female university students when exposed to Concept mapping in Sokoto State, Nigeria" was retained.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the effectiveness of concept mapping instructional strategy in enhancing university students' ecoliteracy and attitude. It compared the scores of students obtained from EKTT and EAI between experimental groups (trained using concept mapping) and control groups. The study had six major findings which were discussed as follows.

The first finding was made from the data in Table 1 which revealed there is no significant difference between the ecological knowledge of students in the experimental group and those in the control group. This was discovered when post-test scores of the section A of EKTT of the experimental group and control group were compared. This finding implies that both concept mapping and lecture methods improve student knowledge when used as an instructional method. The finding contradicts Akintola and Odewumi (2021), who investigated the effectiveness of concept maps on senior secondary school students' achievement in ecological concepts in Ogbomoso South, Nigeria. The finding of the study revealed that concept mapping improves students' ecological knowledge better than traditional lecture methods. The difference between the two studies is that the present study involves university students who are usually adult and educationally more mature compared to senior secondary school students used in the other study. Nevertheless, the two studies established that students'



ecological knowledge is enhanced by method of instruction. This view can be supported by Harlinda and Reza (2019) who conducted a research which aimed to improve university students' ecoliteracy using problem solving methods; the study found that the method of instruction used improved students' ecological knowledge, understanding, awareness and application.

The second finding of the study was discovered when post-test scores from section B of the EKTT, which measures ecological critical thinking of students in the experimental group and control group, were compared. The independent t-test result summary in Table 2 shows that ecological critical thinking scores of students in the experimental group is significantly higher than that in the control group. The implication of this is that students who received ecoliteracy training using concept mapping instructional methods have higher critical thinking ability than those who received the same training using lecture method. Empirical evidence suggests that concept mapping instructional strategy can promote several thinking abilities such as critical thinking, reflective thinking, synthesis, analysis and eventually lead to higher order thinking ability (Cañas, Reiska, & Möllits (2017). This was supported by Aslami et al.7 (2021) who conducted a quasi-experimental study on 100 second-year medical students to find out the effectiveness of concept mapping on their critical thinking skills. The study found that medical students who were taught using concept mapping have significantly improved in critical thinking scores, compared with those in the lecture method group. Furthermore, Chen, Liang, Lee, and Chen (2011) investigated the effect of concept map teaching on students' critical thinking and approach to learning and studying. Results of the independent t-test and ANCOVA analyses revealed that students exposed to concept mapping have significantly higher scores than those exposed to traditional conventional methods. Thus, the study concluded that concept mapping is an effective tool for improving students' ability to think critically. In his Study, Ajaja (2011) reported that all the students interviewed in the concept mapping classroom agreed that concept maps helped them not only in the determination of the relationships among the concepts but also shaped their understanding of the concepts and increased their critical thinking.

The third finding of the study was revealed by data in Table 3 which shows that female students have higher mean scores than their male counterparts in the knowledge section of the EKTT. However, the independent sample t-test result in the table indicated that the difference between the two groups of students is not significant. This inferred that gender has no effect on student ecological knowledge when concept mapping is used during instructional delivery. The implication of this finding is that concept mapping is one of the instructional strategies which are gender friendly. Thus, in line with this, the finding was corroborated by Joel and Kamji (2016) who found no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students taught using concept mapping strategy. Conversely, the finding contradicted Ogbonna (2014) and Egbo (2014) who in their separate research found that concept mapping has a significant effect on male and female students' knowledge. The difference between the two studies is that Ogbonna's reported that concept mapping instructional strategy favored male students, while Egbo's indicated female students scores higher than male students when taught using concept mapping. This study also compared critical thinking of male and female students in ecoliteracy with a view to finding the gender effect on critical thinking when students were taught using concept mapping. The analysis in Table 4 showed that female students have slightly higher mean than male students despite receiving the same treatment. However, the independent sample t-test result revealed that the difference between the two groups is not



significant. Therefore, it is not sufficiently enough to suggest that concept mapping improves female students' critical thinking better than male students. Conversely, it indicated that concept mapping does not discriminate male and female critical thinking especially if it relates to ecoliteracy.

CONCLUSION

Determining the effectiveness of concept mapping in enhancing university students' ecoliteracy is the main target of this study, to enable them make valid decisions and take appropriate actions on ecological issues affecting their surroundings. The choice of concept mapping was as a result of its ability to allow learners to relate and connect concepts, ideas or issues for better understanding of their working. Substantial literature stresses the importance of concept mapping on students' knowledge development, critical thinking and attitude. Findings of this study revolve around the effectiveness of concept mapping on students' ecological knowledge and critical thinking. The study concludes that both concept mapping and the lecture method enhance students' ecological knowledge and can be used as delivery methods at ecoliteracy training aimed at promoting ecological knowledge. On the other hand, if the aim of the training is to promote ecological critical thinking, concept mapping is more appropriate than lecture methods and is gender friendly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The use of both concept mapping and lecture method can be encouraged at ecoliteracy training, which focuses on promoting ecological knowledge.
2. Ecoliteracy training designed to promote ecological critical thinking should adopt concept mapping instructional strategy especially among university students.
3. Concept mapping can be in both male and female groups during ecoliteracy programmes; it does not favor or discriminate between each of the two.

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BASIC EDUCATION AND READING READINESS SKILLS: AN APPRAISAL OF EARLY CHILDHOOD KINDERGARTEN IN IMO STATE, SOUTH-EAST OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *Reading is a basic tool of education and also a crucial aspect in the Nigerian language curriculum. As a receptive skill, it involves the ability to meaningfully interpret or decode written or graphic symbols of a language. It is not merely about how to pronounce words; it is significant that the children understand the meaning of the words they read in order to unfold the hidden treasure of knowledge and also participate in the words' universal culture and civilization. It becomes imperative to kindle reading culture among the children who are faced with several competing leisure time activities. The early childhood or the kindergarten, being the best time to imbibe reading culture and early literacy skills in children, is also the time to get them reading ready. This research, therefore, was mainly initiated to investigate how reading readiness could enhance children's early literacy and factors that affect reading readiness among the kindergarten in Imo State. The sample of the study was drawn from the population of nursery/ primary school teachers in the three educational zones using stratified sampling technique. The main objective of the study being to ascertain the essence of reading readiness in building early childhood literacy skill; thus, a qualitative research method was employed. The findings indicated that the majority of the kindergarten teachers are unqualified and inexperienced to impart reading culture into the children. Other factors are overcrowded classrooms and poor environment that prohibit one-to-one teacher/pupil relationship in the reading class. It was suggested that the government should always organize all-inclusive workshops to train the teachers on the steps in teaching reading. Also, parents should always be provided with regular information on the reading progress of their children for them to make their own input in the reading skill of their children. All the above will help to build a solid reading skill which will promote basic functional education in Imo State.*

KEYWORDS: Basic education, Reading readiness skills, Early childhood education, Kindergarten.



INTRODUCTION

There has been much ado about reading for many years; this is as a result of employers who lament the level of basic skills of some of those entering the labor market. This problem transcends to tertiary education because deficiency from the foundation, kindergarten, affects the learner's overall basic education. Actually, the concerns go back very much further, as do the efforts to redress them.

The importance of basic functional education cannot be overemphasized. No individual state or nation can exist functionally without basic education. As language is the crux of human existence, reading as one of the four language skills is also a very important form or means of communication. To Shihab (2011), reading is a process of thinking actively in order to unlock or understand the idea an author portrays. It involves connecting an author's idea to what one already knows and appropriately coordinating all the ideas for usage. This process of interpreting, connecting and organizing both the author and reader's ideas requires skills and ability on the part of the reader. The learning of reading therefore starts from the mastery of the alphabet of the language as well as the mastery of the skills required for learning reading (Akubulo, Okorie, Onwuka, & Uloh-Bethels, 2015). Reading as an aspect of language curriculum is not merely about how to pronounce words, it transcends to the child understanding the meaning of the words he reads (UBEC & SUBEB, 2022).

Reading is a negotiated activity between the reader and text. Hence reading is a perceptual process of making meaning from what a writer has put down on paper. It is a complex task that involves eye and hand muscles. It requires a degree of reasoning ability and a degree of physical development. Reading readiness, therefore, requires some language activities such as introduction and practice of skills that will be used when the child learns how to read. The reading readiness factors include skills, motivation, desire and attitudes concerning the task and how the child feels about him/herself. The process whereby the teacher or parent encourages and engages the child in reading which helps him to develop mentally, physically, and socio-emotionally is getting the child reading ready. In the basic education context, reading readiness starts from the time a child moves from being a non-reader to a reader. It is therefore necessary to ensure that children are mentally, physically and psychologically matured and prepared to face the task of reading before engaging them in reading. By doing so, they will be ready, willing and capable of reading.

The objective of the research study is to enable the early childhood learners to acquire basic literacy without hesitation, delay, or difficulty and subscribe to reading as an active thinking process of understanding an author's ideas and also connect the ideas to what they already know. It also creates stimulating reading environments for the children and to inculcate in them the ability to use leisure to read for pleasure. Finally, to inform teachers and parents of the essence of their help in their pupils'/children's reading readiness.

The study, therefore, focuses on the efficiency of the teachers and the preparedness of the parents in equipping the children psychologically, emotionally, physically, and socio-economically to face the complex process of reading. Causes and improvement of reading readiness will also be discussed. The collection of data for this study will be done through observations and administration questionnaires.



LITERATURE REVIEW

This section dwells on various scholars that have conducted research on works that have relationship with and relevance to this topic. The aspect, reading readiness, is not popular and therefore, has few researchers that have done some work on it, but no study related to this research has been identified to have been done in Imo State. Language as a means through which man communicates his thoughts and experiences demands the total knowledge of the four language skills. That is to say, communication is a total picture in which speaking, listening, written symbols, and the reading of those symbols are logically connected. Acquiring the oral aspect of a language is quite different from learning a language in a formal setting or classroom. According to Williams (2004), reading instruction involves the development of skills related to the various stages of the curriculum. The reading skill enables the reader to interpret the meaning of words and sentences in connected discourse. There are many problems with second language reading. Reading is a complex task which involves eye and hand muscles and requires a degree of reasoning ability and a degree of physical development (Machado, 1980). The child needs the ability to discover organization of the written symbols in the reading text by putting together the different parts of descriptive passages; unraveling ideas in argumentative discourse; or following the development and analyzing the plot mechanisms of a text.

Reading culture in Nigeria is a phenomenon that cannot be toyed with because the good habit of reading in this present generation is going into serious extinction as a result of various scientific discoveries that have brought about unlimited pleasure to the lives of the generation (Jimoh & Onoja, 2021). In the Nigerian culture, reading is not widely encouraged. Many have seen reading as an activity in which you involve yourself in order to pass an examination and in this case, parents usually provide motivation for their children to make them develop priority in studying their textbooks. In some cases, some parents develop aversion to reading. Such parents see reading as devilish and therefore discourage their children from reading because they think reading will bring unnecessary stress that is capable of causing their children ill health. Some teachers on the other hand see teaching reading as part of the curriculum they must present to the pupils to complete their teaching task and to keep their jobs. Such teachers make no impact in encouraging the pupils to develop reading readiness. Teachers and parents who see reading as a rewarding exercise definitely make sure that something is done urgently to halt the decline.

In her “How Do we Review our Dying Reading Culture?”, Aina (2012) lamented the death of a reading culture among Nigerians especially the youths, stressing that this was one of the problems militating against the quality of education in Nigeria and at the same time affecting the sound growth of this nation. She further stated that for sound reading culture to be cultivated into the child, expectant mothers would be given books to be read to their unborn babies in order to increase the intelligence of their babies and stimulate them to become readers. This is to say that the reading culture should be cultivated from a tender age to make a solid foundation.

One of the most essential needs of every child during early childhood is to acquire reading readiness skills necessary to begin communication through reading later in life. The interest of the children should be stimulated at the kindergarten by exposing them to various activities necessary to develop reading readiness skills. Unfortunately, these basic needs are not usually met by families and schools (Okwudire & Okoroh, 2018). Some of the important pre-reading activities necessary to get the children reading ready do not appear like reading at all, but they



set the stage for a child to become a reader. These pre-reading behaviors may appear spontaneously through a child's observation and mimicry or an adult can encourage them.

Some of the activities that demonstrate that the child is ready to learn to read are that the child tends to know which way is up on a book and the pages turn one at a time and always in the same direction. Also, the knowledge of rhyme indicates that the child is ready to know and read the graphic representation. Lastly, the child's ability to discriminate sounds indicates that he/she is ready to identify them on print.

When any child demonstrates the above behaviors and abilities, he/she may be ready to learn to read. There are several ways of improving reading readiness in children. One of such ways is making reading fun for children. This can be obtainable by singing and talking about reading and also reading to the child and allowing the child to read to you. Try and encourage the child no matter how silly the child reading sounds. Play a game of pronunciation of words with the child. Such games, according to Stow (2011), will improve memory skills and help the child to distinguish between different sounds.

Another strategy that can accompany the above behaviors is reading aloud to the child. Reading aloud supports children's development of reading as an enjoyable experience. Though reading is considered the third language skill by some scholars while some as fourth, it is pertinent to note that no two children learn exactly the same way or at the same age. There is no particular time when all children born the same day become ready for reading instruction. Machado (1980) opines that some have picked up the skill on their own, while others spent time with older family members.

Reading Readiness

The concept of reading readiness is therefore said to be the ability or willingness that allows one to proceed without hesitation, delay, or difficulty to learn reading. Readiness according to Machado (1980) includes skills, motivation, desire, and attitude concerning reading. On reading readiness, Schifferdecker (2007) states that reading readiness actually commences from that particular time when a child transforms from being a non-reader to a reader. According to him, this can be a tough transition but highly rewarding. Children are proud of themselves as they learn to read, but the better ones are better learners throughout their school years. Wikipedia (2013) states that readiness is that point at which a person is ready to learn to read and the time during which a person transitions from being a non-reader into reader. It is, therefore, necessary to ensure that children are mentally, physically and psychologically prepared to face the task of reading before engaging them in reading. By doing so, they will be ready, willing and capable of reading. Reading readiness is so important in learning that no teacher should be anxious to teach the child how to read if he or she is not mentally, physically, and psychologically ready for it (Akubuilu, Okorie, Onwuka, & Uloh-Bethels, 2015).

Click and Parker (2012), in their opinion, state that learning to read and write is a developmental milestone in our society. It was once believed that the language and literacy skills of reading and writing would simply develop when the child was ready, but literacy skills do not come that easily. Children need direct instruction and practice. They need encouragement to practice complex language skills and experience how those skills translate to the written word. The children need meaningful experiences that help them relate literacy skills to events in their everyday lives.



Therefore, the lack of success is evident specifically in children who lack sufficient emerging literacy skills. That is, reading-related skills that children obtain prior to actually reading and writing. It is reading related behaviors and skills that precede formal reading which is conventional literacy.

Early Childhood Education

According to Ofsted (2010), understanding the relationship between the sounds of spoken language and the way those sounds can be represented by one or more letters of the alphabet is fundamental to reading in English. From research carried out, it appears that some children are born readers, some achieve reading skills and others have reading thrust upon them. It is the duty of the primary schools to provide for the three groups. The best schools work on the principle that every child can learn to read.

Early childhood education is a broad term used to describe any type of educational program that serves children in their preschool years, before they are old enough to enter kindergarten. Early childhood education may consist of any number of activities and experiences designed to aid in the cognitive and social development of preschoolers before they enter elementary school.

The indispensability of early childhood education as the basis for the development of cognitive, affective and psychomotor potentials needed in adult life cannot be overemphasized. Hence, it is said that a child should be trained in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it. This is because naturally, anything that is tender is easily amenable and shaped unlike anything that is old or hardened. Anderson (2002) opines that early childhood education instills in the children a critical inquiring mind, basic communication skills, sociality and necessary physical ability needed to guide them in adulthood. Early childhood education refers to the education which provides the pre-school child with physical health, nutritional well-being, and intellectual capabilities. It also enhances the child's aesthetic, emotional and social development in a semi-formal education setting outside the home (Nakpodia, 2011). It is the foundation of the education of the child as it represents the first important step in achieving the goals of education. Mishra (2008) submits that early childhood education refers to a wide range of programmes all aimed at the physical, cognitive and social development of children before they enter primary school. The Federal Republic of Nigeria in the National Policy on Education (NPE) holds that early childhood education is the education given in an educational institution to children prior to their entering the primary school. It includes the crèche, the nursery and the kindergarten (FRN, 2004). The crèche is for children between 0-2 years; the nursery for children between 3-4 years while kindergarten is for children between 3-5 years. Therefore, in an attempt to ensure that every Nigerian child receives adequate early childhood education, the Federal Government of Nigeria through the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004 integrated early childhood education into the existing public primary schools (UBE, 2004).

Early childhood education is focused on the critical developmental milestones, skills, and concepts that children attain during this period of their lives, from social-emotional skills to the beginnings of numeracy, literacy, and critical thinking. Citing Lewis (2019), early childhood education is a term that refers to educational programs and strategies geared toward children from birth to the age of eight. This time period is widely considered the most vulnerable and crucial stage of a person's life. Early childhood education often focuses on guiding children to learn through play. The term commonly refers to preschool or infant/child



care programs. Learning through play is a common teaching philosophy for young children. Jean Piaget developed the PILES theme to meet the physical, intellectual, language, emotional and social needs of children. Piaget's constructivist theory emphasizes educational experiences, giving children the chance to explore and manipulate objects. Children in preschool learn both academic and social-based lessons. They prepare for school by learning letters, numbers, and how to write. They also learn sharing, cooperation, taking turns, and operating within a structured environment.

There are several different facets that all combine to contribute to a child's early education. Tanja (2022) states that in terms of informal education, the primary source of input when it comes to a child's development is, of course, its relationship with its parents or primary caregivers. In essence, parents can be considered to be a child's first teacher. This relationship is especially critical between 0-2 years of age as the child begins to develop its sense of self and establishes an attachment with its parents. The quality of the attachment formed at this stage of life can have a significant impact on a child's future education. The objectives of early childhood education in Nigeria as outlined in the National Policy on Education are as follow:

- i. To effect a smooth transition from home to the school;
- ii. To prepare the child for the primary level of education;
- iii. To provide adequate care and supervision for the children while their parents are at work (on the farms, in the market, offices etc);
- iv. To inculcate social norms;
- v. To inculcate in the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, the environment, art, music, and playing with toys;
- vi. To develop a sense of cooperation and team spirit;
- vii. To learn good habits, especially good health habits, and
- viii. To teach the rudiments of numbers, letters, colors, shapes, forms etc. through play (FRN, 2004, p. 11).

The other part of the equation when it comes to early childhood education is the formal education that it receives at a young age. This stage of education typically spans years 2 to 8 of a child's life. There can be a variety of formats in which a child receives formal education at a young age, which can vary from state to state and program to program. Educational programs may be designed specifically for children at each individual age. They can be provided in settings including childcare, daycare, nursery school, preschool, and kindergarten. Some of these programs are privately run. Others are operated by a local school system or under a federal funded program.



METHODOLOGY

The design adopted for this study is the qualitative descriptive design. This design is guided by the fact that it is a systematic method of collecting and analyzing data collected from a large sample of the population through the use of structured questionnaires and observation. The tools will be used to identify the opinion and attitude of the respondents about the topic under study. Ihejirika and Omego (2011) observed that this type of research is interested in how patterns of behavior by individuals in the society are related to or different from those of other individuals in the society. The design seeks to preserve and analyze the situation form, content, and experience of social action with the use of actual talks, gestures, and so on as the raw materials of analysis. All these gave the researchers the opportunity to gather the necessary information about the targeted population. The population of the study is the sample of teachers drawn from the larger population from the three educational zones in Imo State which are Orlu, Okigwe and Owerri, where 130 teachers were randomly sampled from the three zones. The total number was selected out of the 1466 recorded public nursery/primary schools in Imo State. 15 schools were sampled from each zone making up the total of 45 schools, and from each school, a total of 3 teachers were sampled.

In all, 130 copies of the questionnaire containing 10 items were distributed to respondents in the 45 selected schools and effort was put into collecting them all as completed. The respondents' verdict on each item was established by counting the number of people who considered the item **strongly agreed** or **strongly disagreed** and those who considered it **agreed** or **disagreed**. For easy reference, these figures were converted to simple percentages.

DATA ANALYSIS

ITEMS	SA	%	SD	%	A	%	D	%	Total
Only qualified teachers are employed to teach the kindergartens		-	85	62.5%	10	7.1%	40	30.4%	100%
Parents motivate their children to be reading ready	72	55.0%		-	58	45%	-	-	100%
Teachers of the kindergarten always associate their teachings with objects	-	-	50	38.46%	25	19.23%	55	42.31%	100%
Government always organizes workshop programmes and other incentives for the teacher.	25	19.23%	10	7.70%	65	50%	30	23.07%	100%
Overcrowded classroom prevents the teachers from achieving one-to-one reading attention to the children	130	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	100%



The choice of teachers for the kindergarten should be based on maturity and experience	120	92.30%	-	-	10	7.70%	-	-	100%
Necessary reading materials are all available in the schools	-	-	100	76.92%	5	3.85%	25	19.23%	100%
The background of the child affects his/her reading readiness ability	85	65.38%	6	4.62%	32	24.62%	7	5.38%	100%
Schools give parents the update of their children's reading progress regularly	-	-	55	42.31%	12	9.23%	63	48.46%	100%
Some schools' environments pose distractions to the child's reading	87	66.92%	-	-	35	26.93%	8	6.15%	100%

The respondents' verdict presented item number one to have indicated that schools employ unqualified teachers in the kindergarten classes which affects the reading readiness of the children. It is surprising that 62.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed that "only qualified teachers are employed to teach the kindergartens", while 30.4% disagreed to that effect and only 7.1% just agreed. This indicates that 92.9% refute the claim of employing only qualified teachers.

The response in item two indicates that 55.0% of the respondents strongly agreed that parents motivate their children to be reading ready, while 45% agreed to the claim which indicates some parents put positive efforts to motivate their children to be reading ready. Item number three shows that 38.46% of the respondents strongly refute the statement and 42.31% also disagreed with it, while 19.23% of the respondents agreed that "teachers of the kindergarten always associate their teaching with objects."

The exclusive nature of workshop programmes and other incentives organized by the government for the teachers is indicated in the responses of the respondents. 19.23% strongly agreed to the statement in item number four and 50% just agreed to it, while 7.70% strongly disagreed with the claim and 23.07% just disagreed. Overwhelmingly, in item number five, 100% of the respondents strongly agreed that "overcrowded classrooms prevent the teachers from achieving one-to-one reading attention to the children". Item number six also received a serious positive response. 92.30% strongly agreed that "the choice of teachers for the kindergarten should be based on maturity and experience", while 7.70% responded as agreed therefore giving the item 100% positive acceptance.

The serious lack of necessary reading materials for the kindergarten class is demonstrated above in item number seven. A total response of 76.92% strongly disagreed with the claim and 19.23% disagreed, while only 3.85% only agreed. Item number eight also received a serious positive response, 65.38% strongly agreed that "the background of the child affects his/her reading readiness ability" and 24.62% agreed to the statement, while 4.62% strongly disagreed and 5.38% disagreed. For regular updates of children's reading progress, 42.31% of the respondents strongly disagreed that "schools give parents the update of their children's reading progress regularly" and 48.46% disagreed, while 9.23% agreed to that effect. For item number



ten, 66.92% strongly agreed that “some schools’ environments pose distractions to the child’s reading readiness” and 26.93% agreed, while 6.15% disagreed with the statement.

FINDINGS

The analysis of the data gathered revealed the following:

- i. Majority of the teachers of the kindergarten classes are unqualified, not matured and inexperienced which makes it difficult for them to handle the children effectively.
- ii. Parents’ motivation goes a long way in helping the child to achieve reading readiness.
- iii. At the kindergarten level, associating teaching with objects is paramount because it motivates the children to learn, understand and to retain what they learn.
- iv. Workshop programmes and incentives should be granted to the teachers as motivating factors and to update their knowledge.
- v. Both the physical and social environment of the school should be enhanced to enable the child to be reading ready.
- vi. Overcrowded classrooms should be discouraged so that one-to-one teacher attention and reading should be promoted.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the concept of reading readiness and how important it is to acquire the reading skill especially at the kindergarten level because children at young ages tend to be more receptive at that age. If the reading skill is missed at that foundational stage, it does not necessarily become impossible to read, rather, it affects the smooth running of the general basic education. Hence, pupils are advised to become reading ready at an early age. As simple as this may sound, it does not come without hitches when it comes to acquiring the reading skill. There exist several factors that limit reading readiness in early kindergarten years. These factors include poor reading culture, lack of parental involvement, parental educational and socio-economic background, unqualified and inexperienced teachers, exclusive workshop programmes, lack of incentives and many more. However, these limiting factors in Imo state do not exist without a working solution. Some ideas were recommended in this paper to help enhance reading readiness in early years. Some of these ideas include identifying the needs of each pupil, adopting the right one-to-one instructional method to suit the individual needs of each child, improving the standard and quality of teachers employed in the primary schools, parents having regular progress report of their children’s learning ability, parents helping the children to develop good reading culture in the home by exposing the young ones to books at early ages to enable them start reading, creating enabling environment for the children to be ready to read and the government providing regular all-inclusive workshops for the teachers. If these ideas recommended in this paper are put to work, reading readiness at the kindergarten will be achievable in the educational sector of Imo State.



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EFFECTS OF JIGSAW II AND STUDENTS' TEAM-ACHIEVEMENT DIVISION ON PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS ECONOMICS IN ILORIN WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *The knowledge of Economics plays a vital role in fostering societal development. In spite of its importance, few of the students who took Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations consistently have grade C and above each year. This performance has been traced majorly to the use of teacher centered strategies. This study aimed at determining the effects of Jigsaw II and Students' Team-Achievement Division (STAD) on Performance in Secondary Schools Economics in Ilorin West LGA. The objectives were to: (i) investigate academic performance of students in Economics (ii) examine the effect of Jigsaw II instructional strategy in teaching Economics (iii) examine the effect of STAD in teaching Economics (iv) determine the effects of treatments Jigsaw II and STAD instructional strategies, and (v) ascertain if there was an interaction effect of gender and treatments on students' performance in Economics in Ilorin West LGA, Nigeria. The design adopted for the study was a pre-test post-test, control group quasi-experimental design. The population of the study was all public senior secondary schools in Ilorin West LGA while the target population was students offering Economics. Using the simple random technique, three schools in Ilorin West LGA were drawn after which SSS II students were purposely sampled for the experiment. The instrument for the study was an Economics Performance Test which was face and content validated through expert judgment. Its reliability was determined using parallel forms reliability statistics with a reliability coefficient of 0.82. Research questions were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean (\bar{x}) and skewness while the hypotheses were tested using ANCOVA statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The study concluded that STAD is effective for improving students' academic performance in Economics. This implies that learner-centered strategy can complement other strategies to enhance teaching-learning effectiveness in Economics. The study therefore recommended that teachers should use STAD and Jigsaw II in teaching Economics, authors should make for more learner centered activities in Economics textbooks while school administrators should map-out incentives as well as recognition for teachers who go beyond the traditional method of teaching in implementing the secondary school Economics curriculum, among others.*

KEYWORDS: Jigsaw II Instructional Strategy, Student's Team-Achievement Division (STAD), Conventional Instructional Strategy.



INTRODUCTION

Education is a process by which the knowingsness, skills, tenets and principles of a society are transmitted from one generation to another through an unambiguous method of teaching. Therefore, teaching and learning at different stages of education is to convey an essential and permanent change in the behavior of learners. Efforts have been made to study teaching and improve it in order to make it realize subject centered learning objectives. Teaching involves setting appropriate learning expectations for students, and for that purpose, includes selection and sequencing of activities or kinds of interactions that would lead to expected learning. Learning was described as a process of active engagement, while taking care of learner differences. In this vein, to expedite the method of knowledge transmission, teachers are meant to use a proper teaching methodology relative to the definite objectives and level of outcomes. Teachers are saddled with the responsibility of facilitating learning to effectively impact knowledge in Economics like every other subject as the gap between teaching and learning must necessarily be connected. Ayeni (2011) expressed teaching to be a means of initiating a meaningful change in learners, which may result in changes in learners' behavior to accomplish an unambiguous result. Equally, Ganyaupfu (2013) illustrated that it is very imperative for teachers to be familiar with diverse teaching ways and means which can be used to accommodate the nature of concepts to be taught, if teaching is to be productive. FRN (2014) emphasized the significance of Economics as a subject; it is an ingredient that can stimulate development in any given society. This act has prompted the incorporation of Economics into school curriculum most especially at senior level. However, this stance is well supported in the last edition of National Policy on Education. In this document, it was presented that Senior Secondary Education must be accorded with entrepreneurial skills for self-sufficiency and societal growth.

In the traditional epoch, many teaching practitioners widely applied teacher-centered methods to impact knowledge to the learners, compared to student-centered method. Studies that focus majorly on teaching and learning have suggested that diverse teaching approaches must be considered to stimulate a better learning outcome among learner (Hightower, Delgado, Lloyd, Wittenstein, Sellers & Swanson, 2011). Slavin (2011) discussed that methods of teaching have shifted from an approach which is more focused on teachers to a modern system that is centered on learners. In respect to this, academic investigation has been set forth by different scholars to appraise the imperative role of cooperative learning. Cooperative learning is known to be more of mutual learning approach which is under the purview of the student and it is different from the regular teaching method. It has been reiterated that cooperative learning is good for students because in most situations, it affects the academic outcome of learners positively (Tran & Lewis, 2012).

Similarly, Johnson and Stanne (2000) pointed out that a teaching method provides a framework for interaction among three variables (teacher, the learner and the subject matter). With the mixture of these three elements, such methods will assist the teacher to harness resources for producing certain learning experiences that lead to the attainment/achievement of set objectives in the long-run. The selection and proper usage of the appropriate and most effective method(s) is very crucial to the success of a lesson because a teaching method determines whether a teacher is communicating with his students or not, and consequently the extent and depth to which the lesson objectives would be achieved. The purpose of teaching and learning Economics in the classroom is to help students master the vital principles for understanding financial problems, economic issues and policy alternatives, and consequently apply the



economic perspective accurately and empirically (Khadka, 2016). This promotes a lasting student interest in Economics and the economy (McConnell, Brue, & Flynn, 2009)

There have been concerted efforts by various researchers such as Alabi (2004) and Igueakporo (2005) at getting learners more actively involved in the learning process. This noble gesture has caused the researchers to come up with different and innovative methods of teaching, such as collaborative learning. This method boosts mental capacities and also increases participation in the class. Previous academic works have reiterated that students learn better when they are permitted to take part in the teaching-learning process. According to Hernandez (2002), cooperative learning is a multifaceted process which is developed to expedite functional learning and also advance critical thinking. Similarly, Teacher-Vision (2007) gave explanation and insight about cooperative learning. It is regarded as a teaching method that involves a small group of students working together on a common task. This instructional method is an excellent way to allow students think critically without relying on the teacher for answers. Every associate of the group must learn at the same time, thus producing an atmosphere of selflessness and excellence. Therefore, teaching activities, should involve both the students and the teacher.

Teaching activities that tend to place teachers' activities above students' activities in the course of instructional delivery are recognized as teacher-centered techniques. A good example of this technique is the lecture method widely used in secondary and tertiary institutions of learning, and it is often referred to as traditional or conventional instructional teaching technique. Conversely, teaching activities that promote and allow active students participation and engagement in classroom activities are preferably called student-centered instructional techniques. Oludipe and Oludipe (2010), Anyanwu and Iwuamadi (2015), and Idogho (2016) all submitted that the Nigerian classroom is highly teacher-centered. This type of method creates passive audience among students because during lesson the teachers does the writing and chatting and the student is just expected to take note and write what the teachers is teaching. This method is considered to be less innovative because the teacher is the sole supplier of the teaching instruction; it has been disparaged as a one directional learning style that does not make students a point of attention.

It must be expressed that a productive learning is a sole function of teacher's activities in the classroom. Teaching method is very essential because it is a prerequisite for academic excellence. It should be recognized that the strategy used by the teachers account for the outcome of their teaching. In a research conducted by Adu, Ojelabi and Hammed (2009) on the achievement of economic students for a duration of 9 years (1996-2005), it was revealed that 26.2% of the students had grade A-C and 31.6% had between pass (P7-P8) while 41.9% failed. Adu, Ojelabi and Hammed (2009) also reviewed the results of 10 selected schools considering their WAEC May/June result between the year 2006 and 2015 and found that the academic outcome of Economics candidates was not encouraging as 36.6% of the students had grade A-C (1-6), 43.5% had between pass (7-8) and 18.7% failed. This report could be corroborated by the examiner's report obtained from both WAEC and NECO for academic outcome of Economics candidates between 2016 and 2021.



Problem Statement/Justification

A cross-sectional review of the performance of students in WAEC and NECO in Economics from 2011 to 2017, as shown in the preceding table, reveals that about 50% of the students had A1 to C6. However, to change the narratives of the remaining 50% who failed the subject calls for urgent attention as no student should lack the rudimentary knowledge useful for day-to-day economic dealing in the 21st century. Various reasons have been attributed to students' failure, such as poor teaching style, inappropriate teaching techniques that are not impactful and lauding the teacher-centered teaching style over the student-centered cooperating teaching techniques (Economics Network, 2009; Gamson, 2010). FRN (2013) noted that Economics is a prerequisite concept that every student must be taught, and this must be taught with lively and effective teaching tools. However, it has been observed that the conventional teaching style is the strategy heavily used/adopted by teachers in schools, and this has not helped the learners to acquire the process skills as stipulated in the curriculum. This has therefore necessitated the adoption of new strategies to facilitate learning. Therefore, this study was directed at examining the effectiveness of Jigsaw II and Students Teams-Achievement Division instructional practices on the performance Economics students. In this vein, the effect of gender as a moderating variable was also examined and this was the lacuna this study set out to fill. The following research questions were answered in this study:

1. What is the academic performance of Economic students in Economics in Ilorin West LGA, Kwara State, Nigeria?
2. What is the effect of Jigsaw II instructional strategy on secondary school students' performance in Economics in Ilorin West LGA, Kwara State, Nigeria?
3. What is the effect of Students Team-Achievement Division instructional strategy on secondary school students' performance in Economics in Ilorin West LGA, Kwara State, Nigeria?
4. What are the effects of Jigsaw II and Students Team-Achievement Division instructional strategies on secondary school students' performance in Economics in Ilorin West LGA, Kwara State, Nigeria?
5. What is the interaction effect of gender on treatment (Jigsaw II and Students' Team-Achievement Division on secondary school students' performance in Economics in Ilorin West LGA, Nigeria?

All the research questions were translated into research hypotheses and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Objective(s) of the Study

The core purpose of this research is to investigate the effectiveness of Jigsaw II and Students Team-Achievement Division on secondary school students' performance in Economics in Ilorin West LGA, Nigeria. Explicitly, this research investigates

- a. the academic performance of Economics students;
- b. the effect of Jigsaw II instructional strategies on the performance of economics students



- c. the effect of Students Teams-Achievement Division instructional strategies on secondary school students' performance in Economics in Ilorin West LGA, Kwara State, Nigeria;
- d. the effects of Jigsaw II and Students Team-Achievement Division instructional strategies on secondary school students' performance in Economics in Ilorin West LGA, Kwara State, Nigeria; and
- e. the interaction effect of gender on treatment (Jigsaw II and Students' Team-Achievement Division) on secondary school students' performance in Economics in Ilorin West LGA, Kwara State, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Economics is very important because it is a subject that stimulates growth in all ramifications in the society. Presently, Economics is being taught in every secondary school especially at senior level; this act has been considered as an effective instrument to achieve the educational aims and intentions of the country. Furthermore, Economics is a social science subject that deals with the study of human behaviour and the study of scarcity of resources because the resources to satisfy unlimited human wants and needs are limited in supply; hence, there is the need for choice making and prudent resolution. In this present age, Economics has become an important subject to study in secondary schools and no student should lack the rudimentary knowledge of it by any reason because this will help them in day-to-day economic dealings. Dutuma (2014) revealed that Economics prepares one to deal with issues in a variety of fields including business, law, politics, history and accounting. It helps to understand how society affects purchasing decisions; it helps in a civil service office. It also helps to prepare for the future that affects career prospects, investment decisions and retirement strategies.

Furthermore, Yusuf (2010) opined that Economics is a concept that focuses majorly on how people in the society make a sane and decent resolution regarding what they make financially in relation to living, and also how to make a decision between options to gratify their limitless wants. The researcher further illustrated that the subject focus on the culture of production which is geared at gratifying human wants. With the assertion it may be concluded that Economics more of human disposition. Economics is considered a discipline that covers the scope of humankind under the fields of study. Also, in the last updated National policy of education, Economics is scheduled to be taught after basic classes.

Teachers are saddled with the responsibility of facilitating learning to effectively impact knowledge in Economics like every other subject as the gap between teaching and learning must necessarily be connected. Teaching is a means of initiating meaningful changes in learners which may result to changes in the learners' behavior to accomplish an unambiguous result. Ganyaupfu (2013) equally illustrated that it is very imperative for teachers to be familiar with diverse teaching ways and means which can be used to accommodate the nature of the concepts to be taught, if teaching is to be productive. Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) emphasized the significance of Economics as a subject: it is an ingredient that can stimulate development in any given society. This act has prompted the incorporation of Economics to school curriculum most especially at the senior level. However, this stance is well supported in the last edition of National Policy on Education. In this document, it was presented that



Senior Secondary Education must be accorded with entrepreneurial skills for self-sufficiency and societal growth.

In the traditional epoch, many teaching practitioners widely applied teacher-centered methods to impart knowledge to the learners, compared to student-centered method. Studies that focus majorly on teaching and learning have suggested that diverse teaching approaches must be considered to stimulate a better learning outcome among learners (Hightower et al., 2011). Slavin (2011) discussed that the method of teaching have shifted from an approach which is more focused on teachers to a modern system that is centered on learners. In respect to this, academic investigation has been set forth by different scholars to appraise the imperative role of cooperative learning. Cooperative learning is known to be more of mutual learning approach which is under the purview of the student, and it is different from the regular teaching method. It has been reiterated that cooperative learning is good for students because in most situations, it affects the academic outcome of learners positively (Tran & Lewis, 2012).

There have been concerted efforts by various researchers such as Alabi (2004) and Igueakporo (2005) at getting learners more actively involved in the learning process. This noble gesture has caused the researchers to come up with different innovative methods of teaching, such as collaborative learning. This method boasts mental capacities and increase participatory in the class. Previous academic work has reiterated that students learn better when they are permitted to take part in the teaching-learning process. According to Hernandez (2002), express cooperative learning to be a multifaceted process which is developed to expedite functional learning and also advance critical thinking. Similarly, Teacher-Vision (2007) gave explanation and insight about cooperative learning: it is regarded as teaching means that involves small groups of students working together on a common task. This instructional method is an excellent way to allow students think critically without relying on the teacher for answers. Every associate of the group must learn; at the same time, he/she must ensure every associate of his/her group must also learn, thus producing a selfless and atmosphere of excellence. Therefore, teaching activities should involve both the students and the teacher.

Teaching activities that tend to place teachers' activities above students' activities in the course of instructional delivery are recognized as teacher-centered techniques. A good example of this technique is the lecture method widely used in secondary and tertiary institutions of learning, and it is often referred to as traditional or conventional instructional teaching technique. Conversely, teaching activities that promote and allow active students' participation and engagement in classroom activities are preferably called student-centered instructional techniques. Oludipe and Oludipe (2010), Anyanwu, and Iwuamadi (2015), and Idogho (2016) all submitted that the Nigerian classrooms were highly teacher centered. This type of method creates passive audience among students because during lesson the teacher does the writing and chatting, and the student is just expected to take note and write what the teacher is teaching. This method is less innovative because the teacher is the sole supplier of the teaching instruction; it has been disparaged as a one directional learning style that make students a point of attention. It must be expressed that productive learning is a sole function of teachers' activities in the classroom. Teaching method is very essential because it is a prerequisite for academic excellence. It should be recognized that the strategy used by the teachers accounts for the outcome of their teaching.



METHODOLOGY

The design adopted for the study was a pre-test post-test, control group quasi-experimental design. The population of the study was all public senior secondary schools in Ilorin West LGA while the target population was students offering Economics. Using the simple random technique, three schools in Okene were drawn after which SSS II students were purposely sampled for the experiment as intact classes. The instrument for the study was an Economics Performance Test which was face and content validated through expert judgment. Its reliability was determined using parallel forms reliability statistics with a reliability coefficient of 0.82.

To test the hypothesis set in this research, factorial design of 3x2 was adopted. Jigsaw II and STAD were contained in the first three factorial levels while the conventional method of teaching is contained in the one control group. The second factorial level is gender occurring in either male (M) or female (F). Of course, this design allowed for the experimental group to be given treatment but the control group will not be given any treatment. Conversely, the two main groups received the pre-tests and post-tests before and after the treatment respectively.

The graphical expression of the experimental design is as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: 3x2 Pre-test; Post-test Control Groups Factorial Design on Jigsaw II and Students Teams-Achievement Division Instructional Strategies

<i>Groups (Teaching Method)</i>	<i>Pre-test</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Moderating Variable Gender</i>	<i>Post-Test</i>
Experimental Group I (Jigsaw II)	O ₁ X ₁ M/F		O ₂	
Experimental Group II (STAD)	O ₁ X ₂ M/F		O ₂	
Control Group (CM)	O ₁ - M/F		O ₂	

Key:

- O₁ = Pre-test for experimental (Jigsaw II, STAD) and Control groups
- X₁ = Treatment for the experimental group 1 (Jigsaw II)
- X₂ = Treatment of the experimental group 2
- = Placebo (conventional method)
- O₂ = Post-test of experimental (Jigsaw II, STAD) and Control group
- M/F = Male and Female Students
- = Group non-randomization

Research questions were analysed using descriptive statistics of the mean (\bar{x}) and skewness while the hypotheses were tested using ANCOVA statistics at a 0.05 level of significance.



RESULTS

- (i) Academic performance of students in Economics was above average with $\bar{x} = 50.68$ (Jigsaw II) and 77.14 (STAD) while skewness = -0.85 (Jigsaw II) and -0.03 (STAD);
- (ii) Jigsaw II had a significant effect on secondary school students' academic performance in Economics $F(1, 77.75) = 0.00, p < .05$. Students in Jigsaw II treatments performed better than their counterparts in the control group;
- (iii) STAD had a significant effect on secondary school students' academic performance in Economics $F(1, 286.47) = 0.00, P < .05$. Students in STAD treatments performed better than their counterparts in the control group;
- (iv) Jigsaw II and STAD had a significant effect on secondary school students' academic performance in Economics $F(2, 172.52) = 0.00, P < .05$, favouring students in the STAD group, making this the most effective of the experimental treatments, and there was no significant interaction effect of gender and treatments on secondary school students' academic performance in Economics.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Outcomes from this research indicated that participants in the control group had a lower average whereas participants in the treatment groups (Jigsaw II and STAD) were above average in their academic performance in Economics. The below-average performance of the control group is in line with that of Adu, Ojelabi and Hammed (2009) corroborated by the examiner's report obtained from WAEC and NECO from 2011 to 2017. The report disclosed that students' achievement in economics was below average with less than 50% of the students having grades A-C. The below-average performance of the control group could be because of the obvious argument that Economics is an abstract subject which requires the power of deduction and abstract reasoning for its effective teaching to students (Nwigwe & Ugwu, 2017). Also, Yusuf (2010) explained that while students in these classes are within the age bracket of 13 to 16, there is a notion that the knowledge of Economics may not be successfully imparted to students before this stage (16 years). The low performance recorded could also be linked to the teachers-approach method which is considered to be a traditional/conventional teaching strategy in most Nigerian senior secondary schools (Khalil & Elkhider, 2016). The above-average performance of the experimental groups could be linked to the cooperative learning strategy employed, which is proven to benefit students' learning in many ways. For instance, cooperative learning approaches have been found to positively impact cognitive and affective outcomes, academic achievement as well as knowledge retention (Tran & Lewis, 2012).

Findings from this study revealed that Jigsaw II instructional strategy employed in experimental group 1 had a significant effect on the performance of Economics students. Students in the treatments (Jigsaw II) performed better than their colleagues in the control group; because of this, the group is responsible for the significance recorded. The outcomes of the research bared that respondents in the experimental group did better than the control group participants. Correspondingly, Sahin (2010) also disclosed that there were substantial variances among the experimental and control groups in relation to their attitudes and academic achievement. Also, it was concluded that the students in the experimental group possess the



right perception of the use of the Jigsaw technique. The Jigsaw strategy is an efficient way to learn the course materials in a cooperative listening style. This might be so as the Jigsaw process encourages listening, engagement and empathy by giving each member of the group an essential part to play in the academic activity. Group members must work together as a team to accomplish a common goal; each person depends on all others. No student can succeed completely unless everyone works well together as a team. This cooperation by design facilitates interaction among all students in the class, leading them to value each other as contributors to their common tasks. Therefore, the Jigsaw technique has been proven to encourage students' participation in a classroom where learners have a critical role in success, and this success depends on active cooperation and participation (Putnam, 2004).

STAD instructional strategy employed in experimental group 2 had a significant effect on the performance of Economics students. Students in the treatments (STAD) performed better than their colleagues in the control group and because of this, the group is responsible for the significance recorded. This finding is in line with the work of Jolliffe (2005), Wyk (2013) and Jacobs et al. (2003). The researchers stated that STAD is an effective tool to improve students' achievement.

The findings on the effects of the experimental treatments (Jigsaw II and STAD instructional methods) revealed a significant effect on the performance of Economics students. As revealed by Duncan's Post hoc test, students in experimental group 2 taught with STAD instructional strategy the group that brought about the significance, making this the most effective strategy for teaching Secondary School Economics. This finding is in line with that of Okechukwu et al. (2016) whose findings show that Think-Pair Share and STAD greatly enhanced the performance of Economics students; STAD accounted mostly for the significance. This result could be a result of STAD's suitability for teaching a well-planned concept with a lone accurate answer, like numerical calculations and scientific concepts. Nevertheless, it can effortlessly be modified for use with less well-planned aims by integrating a more open-ended evaluation, like an essay exercise. Nevertheless, it can effortlessly be modified for use with less well-planned aims by integrating more open-ended evaluations, like an essay exercise with appropriately tailored technological aid (Oladele et al., 2022). STAD method has consistently proven to be among the simplest and most effective cooperative learning methods; it is a process where tutors provide learning instruction to learners for them to learn it as a team. It also stimulates and gives room for the student to share ideas through group work, and it opens the door for group responsibility to foster individual learning. Cooperative learning strategies can motivate students and help them focus attention, organize information for understanding and remembering, and monitor and assess learning (Rai & Samsuddin, 2007).

The study found that there was no significant interaction effect of gender and treatments (Jigsaw II and STAD) on the performance of Economics students. This finding is in congruence with that of Onuka and Durowoju (2010; 2011) who reported that gender did not play any significant role in students' achievement in essay writing and business studies respectively. This might be so as gender alone cannot be used to explain how students' characteristic influences academic performance. Okechukwu et al. (2016) were however different on this finding, reporting that girls performed better compared to their male colleagues. Correspondingly, Yusuf (2004) and Alabi (2004) conveyed that collective learning has an effect on the achievement of students in cooperative and competitive instructional strategies as in terms of instructional strategies, academic ability and gender affect students' academic achievement in cooperative and competitive instructional strategies. It means that the



composition and nature of the classroom interaction patterns among students as a whole affect their academic performance with learning.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that STAD is effective in improving students' academic performance in Economics. This implies that a learner-centred strategy can complement other strategies to enhance teaching-learning effectiveness in Economics. The study recommended that teachers should use STAD and Jigsaw II in teaching Economics, authors should make for more learner-centred activities in Economics textbooks, while school administrators should map-out incentives as well as recognition for teachers who go beyond the traditional method of teaching in implementing the secondary school Economics curriculum, among others.

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