ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Investigating the Use of Newspapers as Educational Tools in Teaching and Learning Processes

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Abstract

The focus of this research work was to find out the uses of newspaper as an educational tool. It has been established through many researches that newspapers are useful educational materials. The research design for this study was survey. The population of the study consisted of all primary and secondary schools teachers in Yewa South Local Government of Ogun State. There were 26 primary schools and 16 secondary schools in the local government. The sample consisted of 452 teachers. A stratified random sampling was used to get the sample used. A research questionnaire of 19 items was used to collect the data. All data were analyzed using simple percentages and quantitative description of the phenomenon. It was discovered amongst other things that newspapers were potent resources for teaching and learning; teachers found newspapers useful as a source of additional information for their teaching; there were availability of libraries in schools but they were not stocked with newspapers. It was also discovered that most of the teachers believed that buying and reading of newspapers was a profitable effort but they seldom buy; teachers did encourage their students to read newspapers; teachers were aware of online newspapers but access to online newspapers by teachers was very low. Some of the recommendations given are that there should be provision of functional libraries in schools, government should provide a form of subvention for teachers to buy newspapers, and the ministries of education should organize seminars on the use and usefulness of newspapers in education.

Key words: Newspaper, Teaching, Learning, Classroom and Online newspaper

Introduction

The National Policy on Education (2004) posits that education in Nigeria is an instrument "par excellence" for affecting national development and that no education can rise above the quality of its teachers. This is to say that the role of teachers in children's education is very vital. Any educational plan that does not consider the supply, maintenance, quality and quantity of teachers cannot succeed. Teachers constitute the stock of manpower that brings about the social, political and economic transformation of a nation. Positive attitude, skills and values required for effective functioning of the society are imparted to the students by teachers. It thus means that the quality of education, which a nation enjoys, cannot be isolated from its teachers.

It is an indisputable fact that primary and secondary school levels of education are very important. Psychologists and educators refer to them as formative stages of any individual. Hence, whatever foundation that is laid at this level remains permanent. It follows that qualitative education should be emphasized at these levels. In order to attain this, result-oriented learning resources in addition to fundamental factors in teaching/ learning process shall be adequately provided.

Therefore, it is sufficient to establish that the core aspect of education is the development of the individual (Bello, 2012). This is professionally called learning and this means that for a teacher to be a great player in the teaching and learning process, they must painstakingly utilize learning resources and be well informed about the subject matter as well as evolving issues around them. Simply put, extra learning and adequate use of useful learning materials make the teaching and learning process wholesome and holistic.

However, evidences from personal observation, literature and other sources show that reading culture in Nigeria among the literate and the semi-literate is very low. It is evident that people are no

longer interested in reading extra materials that do not have direct relationship with registered courses in schools. Observations show that after graduation from schools, people tend to believe that they are free from reading. This does not exclude teachers who are expected to learn from different available sources. The supply and use of newspapers as instructional materials in schools is also in doubt. In view of this, it is of importance to carry out a survey of newspaper usage and reading behavior of teachers at both primary and secondary school levels.

Importance and Uses of Newspapers in the Classroom

According to Yani, as cited by Adebayo (2009) in a work titled "Reading Habits of Secondary School Teachers", the reading habits of Nigerians have become a matter of concern in our educational and national development. This view is supported by Adebayo (2009) who state that the most important factor in student learning in schools is the quality of teaching. Teachers are the chief drivers of the education engine. Since education involves interaction between learners, learning materials and teachers, teachers must be avid readers themselves in other to ignite a lifelong reading habit in their students. Adebayo (2009) further state that a good teacher must have a broad information base and should not depend on their lesson notes, which cannot contain all information on a given topic.

Furthermore, the role of the newspaper in the education of individual citizens living together under a single unified government has been noted in historical studies. For more than two centuries in America, newspapers have been used in classroom for instruction (Gardner & Sullivan, 2004). This is to say that the use of newspaper in education is crucial. Gardner and Sullivan (2004) state further that contemporary research on the rational for using newspaper in education still validates known claims that the value of newspaper-based instruction builds students' learning and thinking skills, grows their knowledge base, and stimulates their interest in reading and developing the tools for good citizenship. To this end, there is a need to research into teachers' perception and usage of newspapers in our classrooms.

Teachnology.com (2013) discovers in a research that reading ability and feelings towards reading are related and that forcing children to read yields poor results. It goes further to say that class newspapers allow students to further explore their interests. It means that when students are encouraged, they will develop interest in reading generally. As Adebayo (2009) posits, reading is the foundation upon which other academic skills are built.

School Libraries and Stock of Newspaper for Learning Resources

Omera (2013) declares that the library is the heart of education because it is the centre of activity of any educational enterprise. School libraries contribute to the total development of teachers and students. It enlarges their knowledge and stimulates critical, imaginative and creative facilities. The development of any meaningful educational programme greatly depends on the library. Omera (2013) goes further to say that the power of the library lies in the resources available in it and that the place of school libraries in the overall development of secondary schools cannot be over emphasized. The school library is a resource centre. It is expected to acquire and organize print and non-printed materials suitable for the needs of the users. Ezenwa (1993) supports this fact that the school library is called a media centre, resource centre, or instructional material centre to reflect to the expanded role of the school library in education. Omera (2013) discovers in a study on Teacher's Utilization of Secondary School Libraries in Kogi State that both teachers and the students were not satisfied with the stock and other library resources in school libraries. There were no library resources such as textbooks, dictionaries, newspapers, magazines and display boards. In another study by Fabunmi and Awoyemi (2010) on Primary School Library and Utilization in Ekiti State, it was discovered that fiction and story books topped the list of books available in the libraries. They also discovered that one of the challenges of primary

school library is inadequate fund which topped the list of ranking. Arua (2011) confirms this in a related study of use of library resources by staff and students of secondary schools in Umuahia North Local Government of Abia State. The implication is that newspapers and magazines may not be provided on daily basis for staff and students' use for lack of funding unlike textbooks that are bought once in many years.

Newspaper Reading Habits of Teachers

According to Adebayo (2009), access to information is crucial to individual advancement as well as corporate educational development. Reading is the foundation upon which other academic skills are built. Tella and Akande (2000) as cited by Adebayo (2009) assert that the ability to read is at the heart of self-education and lifelong learning which is capable of transforming life and society.

The most important factor in student learning in schools is the quality of teaching. Teachers are the chief drivers of the education engine since education involves interaction between learners, learning materials and teachers, teachers must be avid readers themselves in order to ignite a lifelong reading habit in students. Trelease (2006) as quoted by Adebayo (2009) notes that teachers are seldom seen reading. A good teacher therefore must have a broad information base and should not depend on their lesson notes which cannot contain all information on a given topic. Contrary to the opinion expressed by Trelease (2006), Adebayo (2009) found out that the frequency with which teachers read is high. That is, they read on daily basis. But most teachers depend on textbooks for preparation of their lesson notes and to be current with developments. This is to say that they read textbooks more than newspapers and they make little use of newspaper in their teaching. However, Kumar and Singh (2011) maintain that newspapers help to improve reading habit, knowledge, and awareness. Newspaper readers read to get the latest information about what is happening around.

Online Newspaper

Online, according to Ward (2003) as quoted by Ganiyu and Akinreti (2011), is the generic term often used loosely to describe digital information access, retrieval or dissemination. The digital process is the breaking down of all information –be it data, text, graphics, audio, still pictures or video – into a sequence of numbers (digits),transportingit by wires cable or broadcast frequency to a destination and then re-assemblingit back into its original form.

Ganiyu and Akinreti (2011) note that it is now very easy to access news on the website of Nigeria newspapers free. It brings in little revenue except for the occasional advertisements. They observe again that access to the *Nation* Newspaper on mobile is free; subscribers are expected to pay a "token" of N100 in short message service to access any of the paper's six special offers. *The Punch* sells scratch card to subscribers at the rate of N1,500 per month. Still on Mobile PUNCH, subscribers can access the full text of an article and also get an e-paper version of the print on their mobile phones through Nigeria's three major mobile networks – MTN, Airtel and GLO. The Nation offers the following six services on its mobile news service: The Nation News update (NNU), Nation Business Update (NBU), Nation Sports Update (NSU), Nation Road Traffic Report (NRTP), Nation Breaking News (NBN) and Nation News Alert (NNA). It has been estimated that more than 61 million Nigerians are using mobile phones and these are mostly young people. This is to say that teachers at both primary and secondary school levels can have access to online newspapers for getting current information and use for classroom teaching and learning.

Research Questions

The following research questions were asked to guide the study:

1. What is the usefulness of newspaper to education?
2. Do teachers read and make use of newspaper as a learning resource?
3. Do school libraries stock newspaper as a

learning resource for the purpose of teaching and learning?
4. What is the perception of teachers towards buying and reading of newspapers and how frequent is this?
5. What is teachers' level of awareness and usage of online newspapers and how frequent do they do this?

Research Methodology

The research design was survey. This was adopted as the research design for this study because it allows for assessment of certain attributes, properties or characteristics of a situation at one or more points in time (Bandele, 2004; Johnson, 2013). The population of the study consisted of all teachers in both primary and secondary schools in Yewa South Local Government Area of Ogun State. The schools are mixed spread across rural and urban areas. As at the time of this study, there are 16 secondary schools and 605 teachers. There are 26 primary schools with 854 teachers. The sample of the study consisted of 452 teachers from both the primary and secondary schools. Stratified random sampling technique was used because of the heterogeneous population involved i.e. male teachers and female teachers. Simple random sampling was later used to get the needed sample. The research instrument that was used was Teachers Perception and Use of Newspaper in Education Questionnaire (TPUNEQ). This was used to collect information from the teachers. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A sought information on the bio-data of the respondents while Section B consisted of information on the perception and the use of newspaper as an educational tool. There were 19 questions in all. Data collected from the study were analyzed using simple percentages and qualitative method to describe the result of the survey.

Results and Discussions

This chapter deals with the presentation of the results and discussions of the data collected for the research. The results of the analysis are presented below.

Table 1: Usefulness of Newspaper in Education

S/N	Questions	Yes	No	Undecided	Total
1.	Do you consider newspaper as part of teaching aid?	(422) 93.4%	(28) 6.2%	(2) 0.4%	452
2.	Do you see any benefits in using newspaper in classroom teaching?	(420) 92.9%	(30) 6.6%	(2) 0.4%	452

Source: Field Survey (2013)

The table above indicates a result of higher proportion of 93.4% of respondents who gave consideration to newspapers as teaching aids and their usefulness in the classroom teaching and learning while 6.2% considered newspaper as non-instructional material.

Table 2: Teachers attitude to reading and making use of newspapers as learning resources

S/N	Questions	Yes	No	Undecided		Total
3.	Do you spend time to read newspapers for classroom teaching?	(288) 63.7%	(162) 35.8%	(2) 0.44		452
		Always	Seldom	Never	Undecided	Total
4.	How do you use newspapers as teaching aid?	(126) 27.9%	(236) 52.2%	(2) 0.4%		452
5.	Does your school management supply newspapers?	(96) 21.2%	(144) 31.9%	(206) 45.6%	(6) 1.3%	452

Source: Field Survey (2013)

The percentage response from teachers reading of newspapers for teaching purposes is very high (63.7%). It also shows that 27.9% of the respondents believe that teachers seldom use newspapers as teaching aids. The data equally show that the schools management do not make adequate provision of newspaper as priority with a percentage of 31.9%. 45.6% of the respondents did not even know whether the school management provides newspaper or not.

Table 3: School libraries and provision of newspapers for teaching and learning process.

S/N	Questions	Yes	No	Undecided		Total
6.	Do you have a school library?	(298) 65.9%	(144) 31.9%	(10) 2.2%		452
7.	Does the school library stock newspapers for teachers' and students' use?	(176) 38.9%	(260) 57.5%	(16) 3.5%		452
		Always	Seldom	Never	Undecided	Total
8.	How frequent does the library stock newspaper for teachers' and students' use?	(86) 19.0%	(140) 30.9%	(214) 47.3%	(12) 2.7%	452

Source: Field Survey (2013)

The table above reveals with 65.9% that majority of the schools have libraries where students and teachers can read except for few schools at 31.9% who are without libraries. But few of the libraries available stock newspapers for teachers and students. This is not as frequent as one may expect. 30.9% confirmed that newspapers are seldom supplied while 47.3% confirmed that newspapers are not supplied at all.

Table 4: Teachers' perception and frequency of buying and reading newspapers

S/N	Questions	Waste of Money	Unnecessary Effort	Profitable Effort	Undecided	Total
9.	How do you see buying of newspapers?	(22) 4.9%	(36) 7.7%	(386) 85.4%	(8) 1.8%	452
		Always	Seldom	Never	Undecided	Total
10.	How frequent do you buy newspapers?	(142) 31.4%	(270) 59.7%	(28) 6.2%	(12) 2.7%	452
		Source of Information	May not be Necessary Because of Available Textbooks	Not Necessary		Total
11.	How do you see reading of newspapers?	(932) 86.7%	(30) 6.6%	(20) 0.4%	(28) 6.2%	452

Source: Field Survey (2013)

The study shows that a higher proportion of respondents of 85.4% affirmed that buying and reading newspapers are profitable efforts but a higher percentage of the respondents at 59.7% seldom buy newspapers. 86.7% of the respondents also confirmed that newspaper reading is a good source of information.

Table 6: Teachers awareness and access to online newspapers

S/N	Questions	Yes	No	Un-decided		Total
15.	Are you aware of the online newspapers?	(380) 84.1%	(5) 11.1%	(22) 4.9%		452
16.	Do you have access to the online newspapers?	(312) 69.0%	(128) 28.3%	(12) 2.7%		452
		Always	Seldom	Never	Undecided	Total
17.	How frequent do you read newspapers online?	(182) 40.2%	(172) 38.1%	(88) 19.5%	(10) 2.2%	452

Source: Field Survey (2013)

In this table with analysis of teachers' awareness and access to online newspapers, it is discovered that a very large number of teachers are aware of the online newspapers. While almost 30% confirmed that they don't have access to the online newspapers, almost 70% have access to the online newspapers. Those who take time to read in view of their access to the newspapers are 40% and those who seldom read online too are almost 40%.

Discussion of Findings

Research question one deals with the usefulness of newspapers in education. It was discovered that almost all the teachers agreed that newspapers are useful as teaching aids. The implication is that newspapers are potent resources for teaching and learning. And this corroborated the findings of Gardner and Sullivan (2004), Bello (2011), and Babalola (2002), who reported in their different studies respectively that the use of newspapers in education still validate known claims that the

value of newspaper-based instruction builds students learning and thinking skills, grows their knowledge bases, stimulates their interest in reading and developing the tools for good citizenship. The use of newspapers as instructional materials cannot be over-emphasized.

Research question two deals with the question on teachers' attitude to reading and making use of newspapers as instructional materials. The data collected revealed that a very high percentage of teachers read newspapers for classroom teaching. That is, in preparation for their classes, they find newspapers useful as materials to be consulted for additional information for their teaching. This may be due to the fact that newspapers contain practical and current information about happenings in the society and these are brought into the class. The implication is that the society and the classroom teaching are brought together to produce fully baked students. Very few teachers do not read newspapers for classroom teaching. This finding is supported with the view expressed by Adebayo (2009) that a good teacher must have a broad information base and should not depend on their lesson notes and textbooks, which cannot contain all the information required on a given topic. However, it was discovered that teachers seldom use newspapers as instructional material in the class and the schools management do not provide teachers with newspapers. These findings are in line with a research carried out to ascertain the availability of instructional materials by Andambi and Kariuku (2013). It was found out that newspapers are the least supplied printed instructional materials in schools. This means that newspapers may not be available for teachers' use even if they intend to do so.

Research question three focuses on school libraries and provision of newspapers for teaching and learning processes. It was discovered that more than half of the schools surveyed have libraries, but do not stock newspapers for students and teachers. The frequency of provision of newspapers was far below expectations. This finding is in line with the findings of Omera (2013), Fabunmi and Awoyemi (2010), whose research showed that school libraries are available but there were no provision for library resources such as textbooks, dictionaries, newspapers and other printed materials.

Research question four deals with teachers' perception and frequency of buying and reading newspapers. The study reveals that the perception of teachers to buying and reading of newspapers is positive. Majority of them see buying and reading of newspapers as profitable efforts and as a means to get useful information. But the frequency with which they buy newspaper is very low. This means that they buy once in a "blue moon", maybe as a result of poor salary package for teachers. The implication for this is that individual advancement as well as corporate educational development will be affected negatively (Adebayo, 2009). The finding here was affirmed by Trelease (2006) that teachers are seldom seen reading. This assertion is in contrast to what Adebayo (2009) found out that teachers' reading habit was high as to encourage them to get additional information from newspapers.

Research question six centers on teachers' awareness and access to online newspapers. It was found out that a greater percentage of teachers under study are aware of the online newspapers and a good number of them. Almost two-third of the teachers, affirmed that they have access to the online newspapers. But the frequency of teachers' access to online newspapers is below fifty percent. This is very low. This shows that the reading level of teachers is very low as it relates to online newspapers. This revelation confirms what Ganiyu and Akinreti (2011) said in their research that it is now very easy to access news on the website of Nigerian newspapers. They also observed that access to the *Nation* Newspaper online is given to subscribers at a "token" of N100 in short message service to access any of the paper's six special offers.

Conclusion

The focus of the study is to find out the use of newspapers as instructional materials in both primary and secondary schools in Yewa South

Local Government of Ogun State. The importance of newspapers as learning resources at these levels of educational pursuit cannot be overemphasized. Apart from traditional textbooks that both educators and students use for teaching and learning purpose, it has been established that the newspaper has been found very useful in educating the mind and moulding personality (Bello, 2011). It has been found out that teachers read newspapers to teach in class and they have access to online newspapers but they rarely use those papers as instructional materials. There is need for education officers and administrators to create a programme to teach and inform teachers of the usefulness of newspapers in education. Furthermore studies can be carried out to cover higher institutions of learning.

Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study the following recommendations are made:

- The ministries of education should organize seminars on the usefulness of newspapers in education.
- More functional and equipped libraries should be built in schools.
- The government should provide a form of subvention for teachers to buy newspapers.
- Government should provide e-libraries for the schools.

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