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Impact of Educational Qualifications on English as a Second Language Teachers' Rating of a New Curriculum Content Items in Niger State, Nigeria

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of educational qualification level on teachers' rating of English language curriculum content items of the new Senior Secondary School English Language curriculum in Niger State, Nigeria. The researcher sought answers to two research questions and tested one formulated hypothesis to guide the study. A survey research method was used and a questionnaire designed and patterned on Likert's five-point scale was used for data collection. The content validity of the questionnaire was established through critical examination by experienced teachers. The reliability of the questionnaire was established on the analyses of result of its administration using test-retest method on ten randomly selected experienced secondary school English language teachers. The reliability coefficient value of 0.843 was arrived at using the Pearson product moment correlation co-efficient statistical technique. The 0.843 r value is above the reliability coefficient acceptable level. The population in this study was two hundred and fifty English Language teachers and sixty were selected for use through the simple balloting and stratified random sampling techniques. The respondents were visited in their schools by the researcher and they responded to the questionnaire there and then, except for some few copies that had to be left with H.O.D., Language for administration and collected on the second visit. The data was analysed using the frequency counts, simple percentile and mean statistical techniques to answer the research questions; and the t-test statistical technique was used in testing the hypothesis. The results revealed that both degree and National Certificate of Education graduate teachers and did not differ significantly in their rating of the curriculum content items. The two groups unanimously rated this aspect of the curriculum favourably highly except for the inadequacy of time for its coverage by teachers. The researcher recommends that the curriculum items be trimmed to ensure its coverage within the allotted time; and that difference of educational qualifications should not be an impediment during recruitment of English teachers.

Keywords: *New Curriculum, English language, rating, educational qualification, degree graduate teachers, National*

1. Introduction

The role and functions of English language in Nigeria warrant concern when students performance in it is poor. English language is used as the medium of instruction and in learning other subjects in all Nigerian educational institutions at all levels. In addition, students are only qualified for admission into the Nigerian universities and other tertiary institutions by scoring a credit pass in it among others, in the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) conducted by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and the National Examination Council (NECO). Thus, the target and anticipated high level of students' proficiency and reduction in their rate of failure in it can only be enhanced if our English curriculum is viable. A curriculum is viable if it is dynamic, realistic, implementable and coverable within the time stipulated for it etcetera. This status of the new senior secondary school (SSS) English language curriculum can be achieved by subjecting it to continuous evaluation. One way we can do this is to seek for the opinion of the English teachers about it since they do its implementation at the grassroots level. Sadly, they also form only 28.13% of the participants that designed it (FMEST, 1985). This meager SSS English teachers' representation at the planning level supports the observations that the Federal Government over relies on experts with minimal, and at times, no teachers' input (Gillet, 1981). This inadequate involvement of classroom teachers might be due to lack of recognition of the fact that teachers retain the ultimate power to ensure or defeat the successful implementation of curriculum change (Coombs, 1977). If their participation was so low, then would the curriculum be acceptable to them? Hence, objective of this study was to investigate the impact of teachers' educational qualification on their perception of English language curriculum content items.

1.1. Research Question

In the course of this study, the research sought answers to the following question:

What is the impact of teachers' levels of educational qualification on their rating of content items of the new SSS English Language curriculum content items?

1.2. Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was formulated to guide this study:

Degree graduate teachers will not differ significantly from the National Certificate in Education (NCE) graduate teachers in their rating of the curriculum content items of the new SSS English curriculum.

1.3. Scope and Significance of the Study

The aspect of the SSS English language curriculum covered by this study is the content items of the new SSS English curriculum and the educational qualification aspect of the English teachers used in this study. Since this is an evaluative study, it is hoped that its findings will be useful to the planners and developers of new SSS English language curriculum in assessing the extent of their success and or otherwise of the work they have done. Secondly, it is hoped that the curriculum specialists and Ministry of Education officials will find this work useful when innovating this and any other English language curriculum.

2. Review of Related Literature

Curriculum experts have defined curriculum evaluation in different ways. Cooley and Lohnes (1964) defined evaluation as “a process in which relevant data are collected and transformed into information for decision-making”. Bloom, Hasting & Madaus (1971) defined curriculum evaluation as a process of agreeing upon programme standards, determining whether a discrepancy exists between aspects of the programme and standards and using discrepancy information to identify the weakness of the programme. Johnstone (1978) quoting Stufflebeam is stated that “evaluation is the process of gathering useful information for judging decision alternatives, getting the information, analyzing it and drawing a final conclusion.” In all these definitions, it is clear that evaluation is considered as a process which involves collecting information which serves as feedback to be used for further decision-making.

This study adopted Stufflebeam’s C.I.P.P. model which has four phases or stages of evaluation according to Popham (1975). These are context evaluation, input evaluation, process evaluation and product evaluation. It looks at the process level or phase of curriculum evaluation by covering the curriculum implementation as viewed by teachers. Since, no doubt, the central figure in curriculum implementation process is the teacher. Hence, Fullan and Pomfret (1977) asserted that teachers ought to have knowledge and understanding of the programme under implementation and such knowledge relates to components of the curriculum such as philosophy, goals and objectives, subject matter and implementation strategy. Eggen and Kanchak (2001) highlighted three major criteria for evaluating teachers’ knowledge of the subject matter of a curriculum and one of which is the knowledge of curriculum content. No doubt, no one can teach what he does not know or understand. Therefore, the teachers’ knowledge of the curriculum content determines the ability to teach it. The implication of this is that teachers must thoroughly understand the content of what they teach.

Some empirical studies on this subject matter revealed some interesting findings. Ameyeu (1988) has done an evaluation of the JSS English curriculum. He used interview questions in data collection. His study revealed that the curriculum contents were comprehensive, relevant and suitable to learners’ needs but the organisational pattern of the items required overhauling.

Yasemin (2008) investigated impact of teachers’ understandings of curriculum implementation innovation in teaching English to young learners in Turkish state schools. The results showed that teachers’ prior educational training had an impact on the extent of their implementation of the curriculum initiative. The study therefore, recommends the provision of continuous teacher training and teacher development opportunities, particularly during the critical first few years of the innovation process to promote the implementation of curriculum innovation in Turkish primary education. Equally too, Salem (2013) studied teachers’ perception of the English language curriculum in Libyan public schools; and the results revealed that teachers’ lack of training has impacted on their perception of curriculum implementation.

Ghazala et al. (2014) studied the perception of teachers regarding the effect of curriculum and examination system on Pakistani college students’ English language performance. One of the major findings revealed that college teachers did not find the curriculum to be useful for English language learning and teaching in Pakistani colleges because it has failed to address practical problems and difficulties faced by the teachers in the implementation of the curriculum at the college level. Theresa (2015) investigated factors affecting English curriculum as perceived by high school English teachers of the Division of Quirino, Philipines. The results revealed that there are no significant differences on the perceptions of the English teachers on the factors affecting English instruction in the Grade 7 K to 12 Education Curriculum based on educational attainment or qualification. English teachers’ rating of the curriculum content was also favourably high.

Donmez (2010) investigated the perception of English language teachers and students on the eighth grade English language curriculum. The results indicated that teachers’ rating of the curriculum content items was low irrespective of differences in their educational qualification levels. Okobia (2011) investigated social studies teachers’ perception of the Junior Secondary School Social Studies Curriculum in Edo State, Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that Social Studies teachers have positive perception of Junior Secondary School Social Studies Curriculum and that their levels of educational qualification did not influence their perception. Adeneye, Adeleye, Samuel, & Alfred (2012) studied teachers’ perception of the new nine-year basic education Mathematics curriculum in Nigeria. The results indicated that the Primary and Junior Secondary Mathematics teachers had high perception of the new nine-year basic education mathematics curriculum-an aspect of UBE programme reform.

Yanik (2007) investigated the perception of English language teachers and students in respect of public primary schools’ English language curriculum. The results indicated that teachers’ rating of the curriculum content items was not favourable and this result was irrespective of educational qualification variable of the teachers. A study by Farouk (1990) revealed that, teachers rated the curriculum

favourably high and that academic qualification of teachers had no significant influence on their perception of Social Studies curriculum.

3. Methodology

The researcher used the survey method and a questionnaire designed and patterned on Likert's five point scale in this study. The instrument was scored as Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 for positive questions and scored Strongly Agree (SA) = 1, Agree (A) = 2, Disagree (D) = 3, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 4, for negative statements and responses. To establish the content validity of the questionnaire, sample copies were given to ten randomly selected experienced English teachers for critical examination and their positive observations were used. The reliability of the questionnaire was established on the analyses of result of its administered twice on ten randomly selected experienced secondary school English language teachers using the Pearson product moment correlation co-efficient statistical technique. The calculated value of r was 0.843. This r value is above the reliability coefficient acceptable level.

The population in this study was two hundred and fifty English Language teachers out of which sixty were selected through simple balloting and stratified random sampling techniques. The sixty English teachers used as respondents were visited in their schools by the researcher and they responded to the questionnaire there and then. Some few copies of the questionnaire had to be left with H.O.D. language for administration and returned later to such schools for collection personally by the researcher. The data was analysed using the frequency counts, simple percentile and mean statistical techniques to answer the research questions and the t-test statistical technique was used in testing the paired null hypotheses

4. Results

This study investigated the effect of educational qualifications on teachers' rating of a new curriculum. The results in table 1 show that out of the 60 English teachers used in this study, 32 (53.3%) were degree graduate English teachers while 28 (46.7%) were graduates of National Certificate of Education (NCE) as shown in table 1 below.

Group	Number	Percentage (%)
Graduate English Teachers	32	53.3
N.C.E. English Teachers	28	46.7
Total	60	100

Table 1: Number and Percentages of Graduate and N.C.E. English Teachers.

This study investigated the effect of educational qualification levels on teachers' rating of new curriculum content. Responding to the statement that the items were capable of developing further skills and competence acquired at the JSS level, results in table 2 below (item 1), show that out of 60 English teachers, 10 (16.7%) strongly agreed, 43 (71.7%) agreed, 6 (10%) disagreed and none strongly disagreed. Equally too, none strongly agreed, 12 (20.0%) agreed, 43 (71.7%) and 5 (8.3%) strongly disagreed that the language items would not be covered within the time specified for them (item 2). Out of the 60 English teachers 14 (23.3%) of them strongly agreed, 43 (70%) agreed, 4 (6.7%) disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement (item 3) that the language item adequately covered the four language skills. Responding to the statement that the language items did not adequately cover the teaching of the grammatical structures, spoken English, writing and comprehension (item 4) no English teacher strongly agreed, 8 (13.3%) agreed, 42 (70%) disagreed and 10 (16.7%) strongly disagreed.

Item No.	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	Total No.	Total %
1	10	16.7	43	71.7	6	10.0	-	0	60	100
2	-	0.0	12	20.0	43	71.7	5	8.3	60	100
3	14	23.3	42	70.0	4	6.7	-	0	60	100
4	-	0.0	8	13.3	42	70.0	10	16.7	60	100
5	11	18.3	36	60.0	13	21.7	-	0	60	100
6	-	0.0	15	25.0	32	53.3	13	21.7	60	100
7	11	18.3	35	58.3	14	23.2	-	0	60	100

Table 2: Frequency and Percentages for 60 English Teachers Perception of the New SSS English Language Curriculum Content

Results in table 2 above show that when responding to the statement (item 5) that language items could encourage the learners attain not a more linguistic competence but more of communicative competence, 11 (18.3%) out of 60 English teachers strongly agreed, 36 (60%) agreed, 13 (21.7%) disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement in item 6 which said that the content items were not up-to-date. The results in table 1 revealed that the responses of English teachers to items 7 showed that 11 (18.3%) strongly agreed, 35 (58.3%) agreed, 14 (23.3%) disagreed and none strongly disagreed that the content items were appropriate to the level and age of the learners.

Curriculum Aspect	Graduate English Teachers Mean (x), n = 32	N.C.E. English Teachers Mean (x), n = 28	Calculated t	Table t
Contents	21.28	20.79	0.925	2.00

Table 3: Means (x) and t-Test Score for Graduate and NCE English Teachers' Responses on their Rating of Content Items of the New SSS English Language Curriculum

This study investigated the effect of educational qualification levels on teachers' rating of new curriculum content. The results in table 3 above show that graduate English teachers' mean score of 21.28 was higher than the NCE English teachers' mean score of 20.79. The calculated t-test value of 0.925 showed that the difference in their means score for their rating of the SSS English language curriculum content items was not significant at .05 level with 58 degree of freedom since the table value (2.00) is greater than the calculated t- value. The null hypothesis was accepted.

5. Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the effect of educational qualifications on teachers' rating of a new curriculum. The results in table 3 indicate that 21.28 and 20.79 were the mean scores for degree graduate and NCE graduate English teachers respectively, for their responses on their rating of the SSS English language curriculum content items. Though the degree graduate English teachers got a higher mean score, the calculated t- test value of 0.925 showed that the difference (in their mean scores) was not significant and the null hypothesis was therefore accepted. Results indicated that both degree graduate and NCE graduate English teachers' rating of the curriculum content items was favourably high; except that teachers' opined that the time for covering the item was inadequate. This finding is in consonance with those of Ameyeu (1975); Adeneye et. al. (2012); Farouk (1990); Theresa (2015) & Okobia (2011) who revealed that teachers generally perceived the curriculum content to be appropriate and rated it favourably high. This finding is but contrary to Yasemin (2008); Donmez (2010); Yanik (2007) & Ghazala, Raja (2013) and Adi-Sarkis (2014) who reported that teachers rated curriculum items unfavourably irrespective of their educational qualification levels.

6. Conclusions/Recommendations

Based on findings of this study, it can be concluded that degree graduate and NCE graduate teachers rated the SSS English Language curriculum content items favourably high except that they opined that the curriculum items cannot be covered within the allotted time. Equally too, English as second language NCE graduate and degree graduate teachers did not differ significantly in their perception of SSS English Language curriculum content items. This leads to the conclusion that educational qualification variable is not an obstacle in ensuring effective and successful curriculum implementation of the new senior Secondary School English Language in Niger State. Based on the findings that the allotted time is inadequate for the implementation or teaching the curriculum content items, it is recommended that the curriculum content items should be trimmed in line with the available and allotted time for its coverage during implementation.

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