

Availability of Instructional Materials at the Basic Education Level in Enugu Educational Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the availability of instructional materials at the basic education level in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. One research question and one hypothesis guided the study. The research question was answered using mean and grand mean ratings, while the hypothesis was tested using t-test statistics at .05 level of significance and a critical value of 1.96. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study, using a researcher developed instrument tagged; availability of instructional materials at the basic education level questionnaire (AIMBELQ). The instrument was validated by 3 experts, 2 of them in Educational Management, and 1 in Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha. Alpha value was found to be 0.73, indicating high reliability of the instrument for the study. Results of data analysis indicated a little extent of availability of instructional materials at the basic education level in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State. This has dire consequences for the entire system. Recommendations include; the various governments, corporate entities, non-governmental organizations and wealthy individuals should as much as possible provide these materials to the various schools for result oriented instructional delivery.

Keywords: Instructional materials, instructional delivery, basic education, availability,

1. Introduction

Throughout the ages, education (whether formal or informal) has been recognized as an instrument for individual and societal transformation. This is the main reason why every society continuously strive to bequeath upon its successive generations education that is not only qualitative, but functional.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014), recognizes education as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development. To actually catalyse national development, or the transformation of any society, available education must not only be qualitative but functional. For education to actually serve its real purpose of societal transformation, the indispensable components of such education must include; quality infrastructure in the form of conducive and adequate classrooms, quality instructors (teachers) at all levels who are highly motivated and qualitative plus relevant instructional materials amongst others.

Instructional materials are all the tools which are needed by the teacher to provide help and encouragement to pupils' learning activities (Ema and Ajayi, 2004). In the words of Onyejemezi in Eya and Ureme (2011), instructional materials are resources or teaching materials, which a teacher utilizes in the course of presenting a lesson in order to make the content of the lesson understandable to the learners. The implication is that the use of instructional materials is inevitable if effective teaching and learning must be achieved.

Instructional materials range from home made devices to sophisticated machines and also people who assist the teacher in disseminating knowledge and information to help learners learn meaningfully (Ololobou, 2008). Since the sense organs of pupils are gateways to learning, materials provide learners the opportunity to become actively involved intellectually, perceptually and physically in the instructional process (Jekayinfa, 2005). The National Teachers Institute (NTI) teacher training manual quoted in Ololobou (2008), categorized instructional materials into print materials, audio-materials, audio-visuals, static/displays and electronic materials.

The materials are derived from various sources, including collection of items from the community, improvised materials by teachers and pupils, distribution of materials by government and non-governmental organizations, donations from various agencies and creation of resource centres. Any effective utilization of instructional materials, requires the instructional process to be organized with a combination of people, materials, facilities and equipment for the realization of stated objectives.

To ensure quality instructional delivery for the benefit of both teacher and learner, basic education requires the appropriate use of a judicious mix of both print, audio, visual, audio-visual and other materials. These materials include; textbooks, journals, magazines, periodicals, wall charts, posters, pictures, maps, globes, filmstrips, slides, projectors, graphs, radio, tape-recorders and televisions. (Adebule, 2008; Okam, 2013). Some of the mentioned materials like pictures, posters, charts and globes appeal to the sense of sight (visuals), while some like television, films and slide projector are audio visuals, as they appeal to both sense of sight and hearing.

Garba (2004), affirms that material resources help bridge the gap between reality and the abstract. For effective instructional delivery, the teacher is encouraged and expected to effectively utilize relevant instructional materials. Such materials make the teaching and learning process more interesting, more effective, more lively, appealing to the learner, instructional delivery simpler and easier.

The vitality of instructional materials towards achieving quality basic education in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State and elsewhere cannot be overemphasized. When instructional materials are properly selected and used;

- 1) help to consolidate learning in the learners' mind and help him to recall things that would have been easily forgotten,
- 2) they are crucial in improving the overall quality of learning experiences of students,
- 3) makes learners employ most of their senses so as to make learning easier and a worthy experience,
- 4) aids the teacher in his teaching and the learner in his learning (Eya and Onuorah in Eya and Ureme 2011).

Other reasons why instructional materials are important in learning include;

- 1) extending the range of experience available to learners,
- 2) providing the teacher with interest compelling spring boards into a wide variety of learning activities,
- 3) assisting the teacher in overcoming physical difficulties of presenting subject matter,
- 4) helping to stimulate students interest,
- 5) extend attention span and make for longer retention of what is learned,
- 6) making it possible to cater for individual differences of learners,
- 7) making teaching and learning easier and more effective as well as facilitating communication (Baribor, 2003).

According to FRN (2014), basic education in Nigeria represents the first 9-years of continuous schooling i.e. from age 6 to 13. It comprises of 3 years lower basic (Primary 1-3), 3 years middle basic (Primary 4-6) and 3 years upper basic (Junior secondary education).

The objectives of upper basic education (junior secondary) which forms the focus of this study include;

- a) provide the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship and educational advancement;
- b) develop patriotic young people equipped to contribute to social development and the performance of their civic responsibilities;
- c) inculcate values and raise morally upright individuals capable of independent thinking and who appreciate the dignity of labour,
- d) inspire national consciousness and harmonious co-existence irrespective of differences in endowment, religion, ethnic and socio economic background.

Achieving the above stated objectives is not just herculean, but uphill. It is possible only through a basic education programme that is both qualitative and functional, achievable with the availability of appropriate learning resources including instructional materials. The availability of appropriate instructional materials at the basic education level particularly JS1-3 in Enugu education zone is uncertain. This forms the problem of the present study.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The poor performance of students in junior secondary schools in Enugu education has become a source of worry to stakeholders in education. Stakeholders adduce this ugly scenario to so many factors including poor facilities, inadequate and poor quality teachers and non availability of instructional materials amongst others. The poser then is; to what extent are instructional materials available at the basic education (particularly, JS1-3) level in Enugu education zone of Enugu State?

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study was to determine the extent of availability of instructional materials at the basic education level (Junior secondary) in Enugu State.

1.3. Research Question

What is the extent of availability of instructional materials in junior secondary schools in Enugu Education zone of Enugu State?

1.4. Hypothesis

H_{01} : There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of availability of instructional materials at the basic education level in Enugu education zone of Enugu State.

1. Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study, using researchers developed instrument tagged; availability of instructional materials at the basic education level questionnaire (AIMBELQ). The instrument is a sixteen item questionnaire. The validation of the instrument was done by three experts; two in educational

management, and one in measurement and evaluation. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha. Alpha value was found to be .73 indicating high reliability of the instrument for the study. The respondents consisted of all the 25 principals of the 25 public secondary schools in the area and 10% of the 2565 teachers (257 teachers). Following the administration and collection of the instrument, some were lost (ie 23 instruments were retrieved) for the principals (92% collection rate), while the collection rate for the teachers was 95% (12 of the questionnaire were lost). Any rating of 2.50 and above were regarded as Great Extent (GE), while those below 2.50 were regarded as Little Extent (LE). The 2.50 mean value of the response values (VGE, 4; GE, 3; LE, 2 and VLE, 1) was found thus:

$$\frac{4 + 3 + 2 + 1}{4} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.50$$

Table 1: Mean ratings, grand mean and standard deviation of respondents on the extent of availability of instructional materials at the basic education level in Enugu education zone of Enugu State.

S/N	Items	N = 23 Principals				X ⁻	SD	Deci.	N = 245 Teachers				X ⁻	SD	Deci.
		VGE 4	GE 3	LE 2	VLE 1				VGE 4	GE 3	LE 2	VLE 1			
1	chalkboard/ whiteboard	9	5	5	4	2.83	1.15	GE	101	38	35	71	2.69	1.27	GE
2	posters	7	7	6	3	2.78	1.04	GE	89	48	52	56	2.69	1.18	GE
3	Relevant textbooks	5	6	6	6	2.43	1.12	LE	34	58	69	84	2.17	1.05	LE
4	Wall charts	7	6	5	5	2.65	1.15	GE	79	62	54	50	2.69	1.13	GE
5	Maps	3	6	5	9	2.13	1.10	LE	20	33	49	145	1.71	0.99	LE
6	Globes	5	4	6	8	2.26	1.18	LE	35	48	66	96	2.09	1.08	LE
7	Pictures	8	6	5	4	2.78	1.13	GE	78	69	54	44	2.74	1.09	GE
8	Journals	-	3	5	15	1.48	0.73	LE	5	18	20	202	1.29	0.69	LE
9	Periodicals	1	2	4	16	1.48	0.85	LE	-	12	25	208	1.20	0.51	LE
10	Magazines	2	4	5	12	1.83	1.03	LE	-	18	38	189	1.30	0.60	LE
11	Filmstrips	-	1	1	21	1.13	0.46	LE	-	10	18	217	1.16	0.46	LE
12	Radio	-	3	3	17	1.39	0.72	LE	9	17	28	191	1.36	0.77	LE
13	Slides	-	-	2	21	1.09	0.29	LE	-	2	9	234	1.05	0.26	LE
14	Projectors	-	-	1	22	1.04	0.21	LE	-	1	7	237	1.04	0.21	LE
15	Televisions	-	-	2	21	1.09	0.29	LE	2	3	5	235	1.7	0.37	LE
16	Taperecorders	1	1	2	19	1.30	0.76	LE	10	12	18	205	1.29	0.74	LE
						1.86	0.82	LE					1.72	0.78	LE

Table 1 above reveals grand-mean ratings of 1.86 and 1.72 for both groups of respondents i.e. principals and teachers respectively. This means that there is a little extent of availability of instructional materials in junior secondary schools (upper basic) in Enugu education zone. This is appalling, as one cannot in any way talk about utilization of such materials when they are not even available.

Table 2: t-test of significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of availability of instructional materials at the basic education level in Enugu education zone of Enugu State.

Respondents	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Principals	23	1.86	0.82	266	0.80	1.96	Do not reject
Teachers	245	1.72	0.78				

Table 2 above reveals that the calculated t-value, t-cal of 0.80 is less than t-crit ie critical value of 1.96 at .05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected. The implication therefore was that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of availability of instructional materials at the upper basic education level in Enugu education zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

1.1. Discussion of the Findings

With mean ratings of 1.86 and 1.72 respectively for both principals and teachers, the researchers found that they needed instructional materials are not available at the basic education level in Enugu education zone of Enugu State. This is a worrisome scenario. This is because basic education forms the foundation which carries the rest of the education system. It must be stated that one cannot talk about utilization of these all important resources that aid teaching and learning when they are not even there in the first place. It may also partly explain the sorry state of the basic education sub-sector in Enugu education zone and elsewhere within the country.

Esponsing the indispensable place of instructional materials in teaching and learning, Garba (2004), posits that instructional materials helps bridge the gap between reality and the abstract. He therefore encourages

teachers to utilize relevant instructional materials in order to ensure effective instructional delivery. Okam (2013) and Adebule, (2008), maintain that to ensure quality instructional delivery for the benefit of both teacher and learner, basic education requires the appropriate use of a judicious mix of both print, audio, visual, audio-visual and other materials.

Contributing, Eya and Onuorah in Eya and Ureme (2011), assert that when instructional materials are properly selected and used; help to consolidate learning in the learner's mind and help him to recall things that would have been easily forgotten, help in improving the overall quality of learning experience of students. Instructional materials also make learners employ most of their senses so as to make learning easier and a worthy experience and aids the teachers in his teaching and the learner in his learning. From the foregoing, the very important place of instructional materials in ensuring the realization of the objectives of basic education especially at the upper basic level cannot be over emphasized.

1.2. Conclusion and Recommendations

Basic education remains the foundation that holds the rest of the educational pyramid. Its vitality or no vitality determines to a great extent the success or failure of the entire educational system. It is clear from the findings of the present study and from literature that instructional materials are indispensable in ensuring quality teaching and learning. The study also found that instructional materials are to a little extent available in junior secondary schools in Enugu education zone of Enugu State. This is bad news, as achieving the stated objectives of the sector without the use of appropriate instructional materials is like fetching water with the local basket (full of holes).

The following are recommended;

- 1) appropriate instructional materials should be made available in all the schools at the basic education level to ensure quality teaching and learning. This also enhances self reliance among the students at the junior secondary school level. The various governments should do this in both rural and urban schools.
- 2) Improvisation amongst the teachers should be encouraged so that they could improvise ready to use and cheap materials that come in handy for result oriented instructional delivery.
- 3) Non-governmental organizations, corporate entities and wealthy individuals should be encouraged to donate such relevant materials to the schools.
- 4) Constant seminars, workshops and conferences should be organized for the teachers to enhance not only their awareness of the indispensable place of such materials in teaching and learning but also the achievement of objectives of basic education.

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