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Teachers' Personality Traits and Pupils' Learning Outcomes in Social Studies at Lower Primary Schools in Southwestern Nigeria

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Abstract:

This study examined the personality traits of primary school teachers in South western Nigeria; and investigated the learning outcomes of primary school pupils in Social Studies. The study adopted cross-sectional descriptive survey design. The population for the study comprised pupils, head teachers and teachers of Early Childhood Education centres in South-western Nigeria. A total of 1,920 primary three pupils, 80 head teachers and 240 teachers constituted the sample size which were selected using multi-stage sampling technique. Four states were selected from the six Southwestern states using simple random sampling procedure. In each of the selected states, two out of the three Senatorial Districts were selected using simple random sampling. Also, in each Senatorial District, two Local Government Areas (LGAs) were selected using simple random sampling making a total of 16 LGAs. Three instruments were used to collect data for the study: Social Studies Achievement Retrieval Checklist (SSARC), Social Attributes Checklist (SAC) and The Big Five Personality Inventory (BFPI). Data collected were analysed using frequency counts and simple percentages. The results showed that primary school teachers exhibited the following personality traits: agreeableness (44.6%), openness to experience (30%) and conscientiousness (13.3%). The results of cognitive learning outcomes of pupils in Social Studies also showed that (45.5%) of the pupils performed below group average level while (39.5%) and (15%) respectively performed at average and above average level of performance. Whereas, (64.2%), (27.1%) and (8.7%) of the pupils respectively exhibited high, moderate and low level in affective learning outcomes measured by social behaviour competence. The study concluded that teachers' personality traits are requirements for effective teaching-learning as well as excellent learning outcomes.

Keywords: Teachers, personality traits, pupils, learning outcomes

1. Introduction

Education remains a veritable instrument for human and national development, without which no modern society could function or develop. It is not only a step towards capacity building and survival of the nation, but also a weapon for obtaining required skills and relevant knowledge for human survival. Besides, education "transforms lives"; proffers way for achieving peace building; enhances poverty reduction as well as serves as a drive towards sustainable development (UNESCO, 2016). Thus, education could be seen as an instrument for the change and development of human kind. As a result of the foregoing, education could be seen as indispensable in the lives of individuals especially any human being desiring to be informed.

Education is a life-long process; it is an on-going and continuous process which starts from infancy and continues throughout one's life. Education can, therefore, be broadly classified into informal and formal education. Informal education is a type of education where it is believed that every member of the society is a learner, such that, every child learns one thing or the other ranging from mode of greetings, relations/interactions, moral values, dressing, lineage history, religious affinity to cultural and social values from parents and other relations within the community. Informal education has 'no formal' defined curriculum; syllabus; subject teachers; classrooms; examinations; as well as certification or graduation. On the other hand, the latter is a formal system of education which was introduced by the European. Formal education is based on a specified curriculum with defined content and syllabuses. Formal education activities, such as teaching-learning process, usually take place in a classroom or school environment. Formal education is based on the principle of examinations and- certification (Adu and Olatundun, 2007). In this study, the formal type of education is delved into.

It is imperative to state also that education, for human being should start from the early childhood age. The early childhood period is very important for child's development; it is a time of growth and development. It is a stage where the

foundation for future learning is laid, and life-long learning is established (UNESCO and UNICEF, 2012). While it is incontrovertible that education is a necessary tool for the improvement of the socio-economic development of an individual and the country as a whole, early childhood education plays a fundamental role in the context of laying the foundation for future academic attainments (Olaleye, Florence, and Omotayo, 2009).

One of the core subjects being taught at lower primary schools is Social Studies. The principal aim of the subject (Social Studies), especially at the lower levels of education (lower primary schools) is mainly to nurture and prepare the pupils into becoming responsible citizens. The National Council of Social Studies (1988) states some of the importance of Social Studies to include – widening the horizons of the pupils in the areas of knowing and acquiring more knowledge about their environments; receiving deep knowledge about the family, ways of life, culture, traditions, about living and interacting together in the community. Teaching of Social Studies, as a core subject to the early childhood/elementary class is very essential and crucial in order for the young people of a nation to become active, responsible and responsive citizens (NCSS, 1988). Social studies teaching is, therefore, part of the educational process that aims at giving the learners some skills, values, attitudes, appreciations, competencies and intellectual capability necessary for them to lead a useful life in the society (Edinyang and Ubi, 2012). In a similar vein, Adeyemi (2016) states, that teaching of Social Studies help to understanding the societal problems, and thus help in offer solutions to those problems. Besides, knowledge of Social Studies helps in taking into 'cognizance the peculiarities of the society for which it is prepared'. Thus, Social Studies is a subject which is purposely planned to 'positively influence learners' understanding of their immediate environment'.

Similarly, the quality of education according to Abe and Adu (2013) is determined by the quality of teachers. Thus, the only way to improving pupils' achievement is by employing seasoned and qualified teachers. Teacher's certification status and specialization are very significant and positively correlated with pupils' learning outcomes. Teaching qualification or teachers' qualification is academic and/or professional degree that enables a person to become a qualified teacher. Such qualifications include, but are not limited to, the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGDE); The Professional Diploma in Education (PDE); Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.); Bachelor of Arts in Education (B. A. Ed.); Bachelor of Science in Education (B.Sc. Ed.) and Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) (Abe, 2014).

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Teaching-learning activities depend largely on variables such as pupils' readiness, teacher's knowledge and teacher's personality traits, learning materials and general classroom and school environments. Similarly, educational quality and progress of a nation cannot be detached from the quality of the teachers. One of the most important players, influencing child's educational achievement, is teacher. This is because, teachers are in the mainstream of education as well as involve in the major components of any pedagogical programme. Apart from the foregoing, teachers are the key holders that close the gap which parents could not fill at home that determines child's learning outcomes (Goldhaber, 2008). In other words, the performance of pupils in academic activities is a product of effective teachers and the quality of knowledge facilitated into the pupils while in the classroom environment. Teachers remain the major critical players in the real school setting; hence this study.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to analyse teachers' personality traits and pupils learning outcomes in Social Studies at lower Primary Schools in Southwestern Nigeria.

Specific objectives of the study are to

- Examines the personality traits of primary school teachers in Southwestern Nigeria;
- Investigate the learning outcomes of primary school pupils in Social Studies in Southwestern Nigeria;

1.3. Research Questions

The study attempted to provide answers to the following pertinent questions:

- What are the personality traits of primary schools' teachers in south western Nigeria?
- What are the learning outcomes of pupils in Social Studies in South western Nigeria?

2. Methodology

The study adopted cross-sectional descriptive survey design. The population for the study comprised pupils, head teachers and teachers of Early Childhood Education centres in South-western Nigeria. A total of 1,920 primary three pupils, 80 head teachers and 240 teachers which constituted the sample were selected using multi-stage sampling technique. Four states were selected from the six Southwestern states using simple random sampling procedure. In each of the selected states, two out of the three Senatorial Districts were selected using simple random sampling. Also, in each Senatorial District, two Local Government Areas (LGAs) were selected using simple random sampling making a total of 16 LGAs. Thereafter, five (5) primary schools were selected from each of the LGAs using simple random sampling technique making a total of 80 primary schools. The head teacher as well as three teachers of Social Studies were purposively and randomly selected respectively in each school making a total of 80 head teachers and 240 classroom teachers. Furthermore, 24 primary three pupils were selected in each of the primary schools making a total of 1,920 pupils that participated in the study. Three instruments were used to collect data for the study: Social Studies Achievement Retrieval Checklist (SSARC), Social Attributes Checklist (SAC) and The Big Five Personality Inventory (BFPI). Social Studies Achievement Retrieval Checklist (SSARC) was used to collect data on pupils' achievement in Social Studies subject in the classroom. SSARC was a pro forma designed to obtain pupils' achievement scores in Social Studies from the school terminal records. The Social Attributes Checklist (SAC) which was adapted from A Checklist of Social Attributes developed

by McClellan and Katz (1993) was used to measure the affective aspect of pupil's learning outcome. The Big Five Personality Inventory (BFPI) was used in this study to measure teacher's personality type. This inventory was adapted from the Big Five Personality Inventory developed by Goldberg (1993). The instruments were validated before use. The reliability co-efficient, obtained using internal consistency approach based on Cronbach's Alpha, of SAC was 0.72 while that of BFPI were as follows: Extraversion (0.74), Agreeableness (0.70), Conscientiousness (0.78), Neuroticism (0.65), and Openness to experience (0.82). Data collected were analysed using frequency table and percentages.

3. Results

Research Question 1: What are the personality traits of teachers in primary schools in South western Nigeria?

In order to answer this research question, teachers' responses to items on The Big Five Personality Inventory (BFPI) were scored such that Strongly Disagree response was allotted 1, a little Disagree response, 2, Neither agree nor disagree response, 3, Agree a little response, 4, and Strongly Agree was allotted 5. However, items, 2, 6, 8, 9, 12, 18, 21, 23, 24, 27, 31, 34, 35, 37, 41, and 43 were reversed in scoring. On this scale, items 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26, 31 and 36 measured Extraversion; items 2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27, 32, 37, and 42 measured Agreeableness; items 3, 8, 13, 18, 23, 28, 33, 38, and 43 measured Conscientiousness; items 4, 9, 14, 19, 24, 29, 34, and 39 measured Neuroticism, while items 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 41, and 44 measured Openness to experience personality traits. These constituting items were computed separately for each personality trait. In order to ensure standardization, the generated scores were further divided by the respective constituting items. Individual teachers were classified on the basis of where he/she had the highest scores along the five identified personality traits. This classification is further subjected to a descriptive analysis of frequency and percentage. The result is presented in Table 1.

Personality Traits	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Extraversion	9	3.8
Agreeableness	107	44.6
Conscientiousness	32	13.3
Neuroticism	20	8.3
Openness to experience	72	30.0
Total	240	100.0

Table 1: Personality Traits of the Teachers in Primary Schools in South western Nigeria
Source: Fieldwork, 2017

Table 1 shows the personality traits of the teachers in primary schools in South western Nigeria. As shown in the table, out of 240 (100.0%) of the teachers sampled in this study, 9 (3.8%) exhibited extraversion personality traits, 107 (44.6%) of the teachers exhibited agreeableness, 32 (13.3%) exhibited conscientiousness, 20 (8.3%) exhibited neuroticism while 72 (30.0%) of the teachers exhibited openness to experience personality traits. Indication is shown from this result that more of the teachers in primary schools in South western Nigeria exhibited agreeableness and openness to experience aspects of personality traits than other personality traits.

The results showed that primary school teachers exhibited the following personality traits: agreeableness (44.6%), openness to experience (30%) and conscientiousness (13.3%).

3.1. Research Question 2

3.1.1. What are the Learning Outcomes of Pupils in Social Studies in South Western Nigeria?

In order to answer this research question, pupils' performance scores in first to third term were collected and added together. These scores were divided by three to obtain the average performance score for each pupil. The mean and standard deviation performance scores for these pupils were respectively 72 and 7.2. Therefore, scores less than average performance score were classified as Below Average performance (> 72); scores of 72-79 were classified as Average performance while scores of 80 and above were classified as Above Average performance. For affective aspect of learning outcomes, pupils' rating scores (As rated by their respective class teachers) on items in Social Attribute Checklist (SAC) were added together. The maximum rating score obtainable in this scale was 24. However, scores of 1-8 were classified as Low level of social behaviour competence, scores of 9-16 as moderate level of social behaviour competence while scores of 17-24 were classified as high level of social behaviour competence. These classifications for both cognitive and affective aspects of learning outcomes were subjected to a descriptive analysis of frequency and percentage. The result is presented in Table 2.

Learning Outcomes	Levels	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Cognitive Learning Outcomes (Achievement in Social Studies)	Below Average	874	45.5
	Average	758	39.5
	Above Average	288	15.0
	Total	1920	100.0
Affective Learning Outcomes (Level Social Behaviour Competence)	Low	167	8.7
	Moderate	521	27.1
	High	1232	64.2
	Total	1920	100.0

Table 2: Learning Outcomes of Primary School Pupils in Social Studies in South western Nigeria
Source: Fieldwork, 2017

The results of cognitive learning outcomes of pupils in Social Studies also showed that (45.5%) of the pupils performed below group average level while (39.5%) and (15%) respectively performed at average and above average level of performance. Whereas, (64.2%), (27.1%) and (8.7%) of the pupils respectively exhibited high, moderate and low level in affective learning outcomes measured by social behaviour competence.

4. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that more of the teachers in primary schools in Southwestern Nigeria exhibited agreeableness and openness to experience aspects of personality traits than other personality traits. This finding partially supported the findings of Mete (2006) stated that primary school teachers possess openness to experience characteristics the most and followed by agreeableness, extraversion, and emotional stability characteristics. Arif, Rashid, Tahira & Akter (2012) also found that when compared with the remaining four Big Five personality traits openness personality trait of prospective teachers was more dominant. Similarly, study of Sanja and Irena (2013) revealed that preschool teachers recorded higher mean value on personality traits such as openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness compared with others while the study of Kursad (2014) indicated that teachers recorded higher mean scores on personality traits inventory in order of agreeableness, openness to experience, extraversion, and emotional stability characteristics. For instance, Personality traits such as agreeableness, extraversion, and emotional stability are extremely significant in terms of teachers' organizational life as well as in their relationship with students. These characteristics have been considered as essential in helping the teachers build healthy and more stable social relationships regarding human relations and communications (Kursad, 2014).

Other findings of this study revealed that while a considerable percentage of the pupils performed below average in cognitive aspect of learning outcomes, more than half of the pupils exhibited a high level of social behaviour competence. Teaching of subject like Social studies in schools seeks to achieve two major goals. Firstly, it tends to sharpen learner's mind in terms of cognitive repertoire. This is usually measured in terms of what learner has been able to achieve within a given period of time. The second aspect has to do with skills and values expected to be demonstrated in a learner having being exposed to certain concepts in Social Studies. This is the affective aspect. As revealed in this study despite the fact that many pupils performed below the average level of performance, majority of the same pupils exhibited high level of social behaviour competence indicating that in terms of affective aspect of pupils' learning outcomes, pupils are on good course.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that in South-western Nigeria, teachers' morale had been dampened due to the ways and manners they are being treated by their employers, especially, the government at the State levels. Their salaries are not paid as at when due, their allowances are hitherto stopped and are no longer promoted, while classrooms and school environments are not befitting. Teachers are neither motivated nor reinforced, so they are psychologically depressed, all these are detrimental to personality traits of teachers.

6. Recommendations

In order to overcome some of the challenges militating against the manifestations of teachers' personality traits, and to enhance better performance of teachers for effective teaching-learning of the pupils in Southwestern Nigeria, the following recommendations are offered.

- Giving the fact that teachers are major stakeholders in school programmes and activities; and that pupils' learning outcomes depend largely on them, it is strongly recommended that their salaries and allowances be paid as and when due. This can be simply achieved if teachers' salaries and allowances can be given special priorities in the yearly budgetary allocation.
- On the issue of delay in promotion of teachers, special attention and necessary action must be taken by the employers of teachers. This is necessary because no teacher will want to give his or her best to a work where there is no hope of advancement. The employers of teachers can achieve this by developing special packages for teachers' advancement. This can be accomplished by setting aside, in their budgets, money for annual increments and promotion. The annual performance appraisal of teachers must also be taken seriously in order to assess on yearly basis, activities and performances of teachers.

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