

AN ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' USE OF INFORMATION RESOURCES IN ABEOKUTA NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OGUN STATE

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to survey the use of information resources among senior secondary school teachers in Abeokuta North local government area of Ogun State. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Using the multistage sampling technique, four public secondary schools were purposively selected resulting in a sample size of 243 teachers. A self-developed questionnaire was used for data collection and analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that the teachers mostly use textbook, reference sources and internet to obtain information for their teaching activities. The major purposes for consulting information sources among the teachers were to prepare for classroom teaching and obtain examination questions. The study also revealed that the teachers are using ICTs frequently to obtain information, but are challenged by the lack of functional school library and high cost of internet. It was recommended that the State government and school administrators equip school libraries with resources and programmes that will make them function effectively to the advantage of secondary school teachers. Librarians in public libraries should also train secondary school teachers to improve their use of ICT resources.

Keywords: *school libraries, information resources, secondary school teachers, information us*

Introduction

Education has the succeeding recipes role of comprehensively cultivating human capabilities. It promotes the “development of cognition, self-control, and a variety of skills and abilities” (Atella and Kopinska, 2014). The provision of thriving educational system is one of the ways to enhance a nation's development. For this to happen, teachers in educational systems must provide versatile teaching processes that will foster an accelerated development of the students. The present Nigerian educational system is known as the 9-3-4 system, which implies that individuals are expected to pass through nine years of basic education in primary and junior secondary schools, three years in the senior secondary schools, and a four year of tertiary education. At every stage in this system, and especially in secondary schools, teachers play vital roles in determining the future career of the students.

The secondary education system in Nigeria is a platform through which teachers prepare young adults, usually teenagers, of the society with the essential knowledge, skills, and morals that will capacitate them to contribute to the socioeconomic development of the nation in the future. Such preparation involves

the process of teaching, which entails instructing students on skills, attitudes, and knowledge, with the expectation that the students will comprehend the information, act in certain ways, or do something in conformity to the instruction given by the teacher (Ogunduyile, 2013). Traditionally, teaching in secondary schools is carried out using either the teacher-centered or the student-centered approaches (Bagudo, 2006). Before now, teachers often make use of the teacher-centered approach, which stressed that teachers are the sole dictator in the education of the students, and the students must unquestionably follow every instruction, belief or knowledge the teacher issues to them.

However, recent developments in modern technologies have made teachers to shift attention to the students-centered approach, which emphasizes that students and teachers should be actively involved in the learning process of the students. This infers that teachers will pass instruction and guide students on various aspects of knowledge, while the students can make necessary inputs that will facilitate learning and understanding. Because students now prefer a more non-traditional approach to learning, teachers need to “use a variety of information sources in their lessons so as to keep the students interested and their lessons current and informative” (Mokhtar and Majid, 2005).

As part of the teaching process, secondary school teachers engage in various activities, such as writing of lesson notes, prepare students for competitions, career guidance, counseling, et cetera. Teachers write lesson notes to set goals for their meeting session with the students. Lesson notes are also written to organize the entire teaching process in conformity with the school's curriculum. Secondary school teachers in Nigeria are also expected to prepare for sermons, which is a form of daily lecture on morals and spiritual development that is given to students on the assembly. To carry out these tasks, teachers need to constantly obtain and use information sources and update their knowledge in the areas of interest to them.

Information use is a broad concept that describes the various manners, frequencies and purposes for which information is used by an individual (Mishra, 2011). Teachers in secondary schools often need information to answer students' questions within and outside the classroom, as well as to ensure that they are adequately updated about the needed knowledge for their subject (Acar and Kilic, 2011). The types of information sources consulted by a teacher may depend on the purpose for which the information is needed. Hazarika (2005) explained that information use pattern is determined by factors as “available resources, time and cost involved in searching and gathering desired information and above all, the infrastructure facilities available at a given time and space.”

Information searching is one of the activities teachers engage in to locate, access, and retrieve information that are needed to carry out their duties as teachers. Information searching includes all the activities that are involved when teachers seek information. This can as well be described as the sources of information that are consulted by the teachers while seeking information that are needed for their teaching activities. According to Aina (2004), there are various types of information

sources that can be consulted by individuals while searching for information. Examples of such information sources include books, serials, manuscripts, cartographic materials, graphic materials, sound materials, digital materials and the internet.

Secondary school teachers are expected to make use of various information sources to obtain information that will be used to perform their teaching functions effectively. However, it was observed that many of the public secondary school teachers in Ogun State find it difficult to search for information for their teaching activities /purposes in the schools. This has been evident in the fact that many of these teachers do not use recent and relevant information to update their lesson notes. It was also observed that most of the public secondary schools in Ogun State do not have functional school libraries that should have catered for the information needs of the teachers to easily obtain and using the information they need for teaching.

Research Questions

Based on the aim, the following research questions were investigated in the study:

1. What sources of information are consulted by secondary school teachers in Ogun State?
2. Which teaching purposes/activities do secondary school teachers need information resources for?
3. How easily do secondary school teachers obtain information for their teaching activities?
4. How frequently do the teachers use ICT facilities to obtain information?
5. What challenges are associated with sourcing obtaining for information for teaching by secondary school teachers?

Review of Related Literature

Teachers search for information from various sources in order to meet up with their needs. Amos and Abdulkareem (2012) surveyed the sources of information used by social studies teachers in Ogun State Nigeria, and reported that the teachers source for information from reference “reference materials, newspapers, journals, literary materials, historical monuments and artifacts, television, textbooks, resource person, magazines, pamphlets, bulletins and radio.” Adeyanju (2003) also revealed that teachers in secondary schools have confined themselves and the students to consulting only few information sources while sourcing for information they can use in teaching the students. The authors noted that most teachers often use textbooks as the major source of information for teaching.

In a review of the literature, Olsen and Diekema (2011) found that teachers information sourcing and seeking behaviour is understudied. The authors conducted the first review of the literature (consisting of 33 articles) on Kindergarten to Grade 12 teachers online information seeking behaviour from 1983-2010. Some key findings about teachers' information seeking were that what teachers learn in professional development activities guides teachers' information sourcing, and many teachers are self-taught when it comes to seeking information.

Teachers tended to be strategic searchers; that is, they only search for specific information (Servais, 2012).

Furthermore, in a study by O'Gorman and Drudy (2010), who surveyed 642 elementary and secondary school teachers in Ireland about their most urgent professional development needs and the majority of their top five needs for both groups were special education information needs. The top need for both groups was to use information to test students and to know the right teaching methodologies that suit each class they teach. Reid (2007) also reported that in a national survey of public school teachers in the United States, teachers with fewer years of experience (3 or less) prioritized their use of information to be about methods of teaching, student discipline strategies, and how to teach students with special needs, whereas teachers with more experience (19 or more years) prioritized their professional development needs as learning about how to integrate technology in instruction.

The use of ICT by teachers in secondary schools has been described as a facilitator of teaching and learning. In a study conducted by Makewa, Maromo, Role and Role (2013) on the perception of teachers and administrators about the use of ICT in secondary schools, the authors revealed that ICT use to gather information for teaching in secondary schools is considered to be important by the respondents. Yunus and Sulaiman (2014) reported that the level of ICT use among the respondents is at a "satisfactory level." The authors revealed that the teacher and the students have a positive attitude toward ICT use in the schools. Their findings show that about 35% of all the respondents have an exposure period of 5 to 6 years with ICT, and 32.8% have been using ICT for more than 9 years. The findings on the part of the teachers report that 73% uses ICT during the teaching and learning process in their schools, while others still prefer the traditional approach to information sourcing in teaching-learning process.

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The study population consisted of 609 senior secondary school teachers from the nine public secondary schools in Abeokuta North Local Government area of Ogun State. From the population, a multistage sampling technique was used to obtain the number of respondents used in this study. The resultant sample size was 243.

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed following extensive review of literature to ensure that relevant items to the research questions were included. The questionnaire was administered to the teachers and retrieved immediately by the researchers within the school premises.

Results

Respondents' Demography

The demographic information of the respondents are as presented in Table 1. The result showed that there were more females (72.0%) in the study than males. Also, most of the teachers (44.4%) that responded to the study are in the age group 30 – 39 years.

Table 1: Demographic information of respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	68	28.0
Female	175	72.0
Age group (yrs.)		
50	50	20.6
20-29	108	44.4
30-39	49	20.2
40-49	29	11.9
50-59	7	2.9
60 & above		

Sources of information consulted by the secondary school teachers

Results from the study (as in Figure 1) showed that the leading information sources the teachers agreed to using were textbook (n=211), reference sources (n=177) and internet (n=177). Conversely, majority of the teachers disagreed to using religious books (n=92), databases (n=59) and journal articles (n=59) for their teaching activities.



Fig. 1: information sources consulted by secondary school teachers

Teaching activities that teachers need information resources for

As shown in Figure 2, the study revealed that preparation for classroom teaching (n=208) and obtaining examination/assignment questions (n=180) were the leading activity that the teachers agreed to consult information resources for, while assembly talk (n=45) was mostly disagreed at the activity they need information resources for.

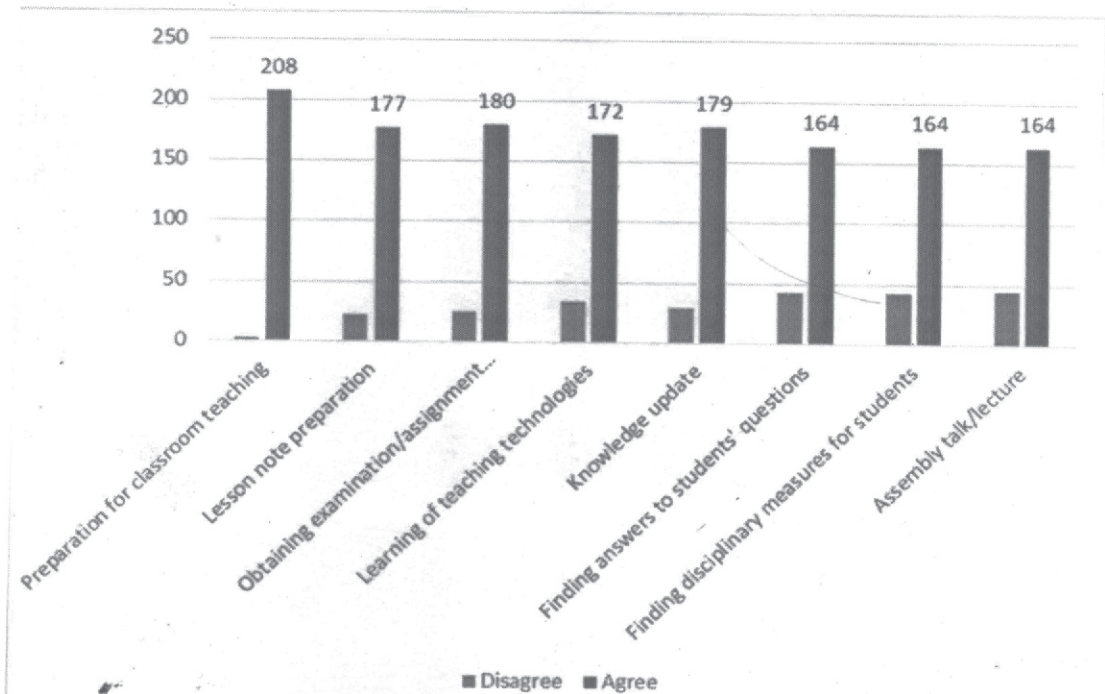


Fig. 2: activities that teachers need information resources for

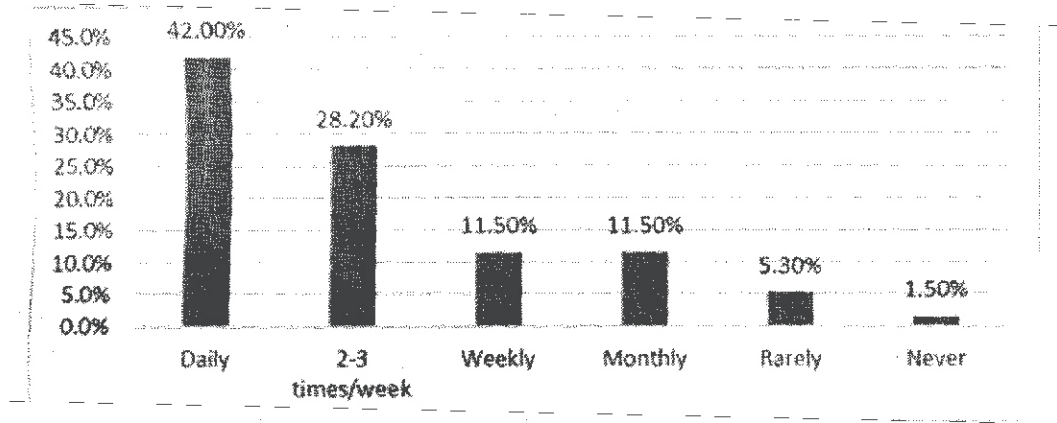
Ease of access to information for teaching activities by teachers in secondary schools From the study, the result showed that the teachers obtain information more easily for knowledge update (Mean = 3.32) and preparation for classroom teaching (Mean = 3.31) than other activities. However, the least activity they obtain information for was finding disciplinary measures for students (Table 2).

Table 2: Ease of access to information for teaching activities by teachers

Teaching activities	Never Accessible	Not Easily Accessible	Easily Accessible	Very Easily Accessible	Mean
Preparation for classroom teaching	-	8	166	34	3.31
Lesson note preparation	-	9	176	32	3.28
Obtaining examination/assignment questions	-	15	158	29	2.78
Learning teaching methodologies	4	19	153	25	3.06
Knowledge update	1	24	160	22	3.32
Finding answers to students' questions	2	17	171	16	2.85
Finding disciplinary measures for students	5	30	160	11	2.40
Assembly talk/lecture	17	17	154	18	3.19

Frequency of ICT use for obtaining information for teaching

The result as shown in Figure 3 revealed that majority of the teachers are using ICT daily (f=42.0%). The trend in the figure also showed that more teachers were using ICT frequently than those that rarely or never used it to obtain information for teaching.



Challenges associated with obtaining information for teaching by secondary school teachers

The result shown in Table 2 revealed that majority of the teachers (> 50%) agreed that the following were challenges for them to obtain needed information for teaching: lack of functional library (78%), high cost of internet (66.6%), Lack of ICT skills (53.1%), low awareness about information sources (63.9%), lack of relevant information resources (56.8%). However, majority of the teachers (55.6%) disagreed that inadequate training on information literacy was a challenge to them with respect to this.

Table 2: challenges encountered by teachers to obtain information

Challenges	Disagree		Agree	
	No	%	No	%
Lack of functional library	44	22.0	156	78.0
High cost of internet	66	33.3	132	66.6
Lack of skills to operate ICTs	92	46.9	104	53.1
Low awareness about information sources	70	36.1	124	63.9
Lack of intellectual challenge from students	94	47.2	105	52.8
Lack of relevant information resources	86	43.2	113	56.8
Inadequate training on information literacy	110	55.6	88	44.4

Table 2: challenges encountered by teachers to obtain information

Discussion of Findings

Findings in this study revealed that secondary school teachers prefer to consult are textbooks, reference sources and internet as their information sources. The preference for textbooks may understandably be because they provide easy understanding and synopsis for teaching in line with the curriculum, and so,

teachers may actually prefer them to quickly obtain the information they need. This corroborate the submission of Amos and Abdulkareem (2012), who submitted that secondary school teachers prefer to confine themselves to consulting only few information resources.

Meanwhile, the rising use of internet as information source could be traced to the proliferation in the use of mobile smartphones in the country. This poses a new challenge to information professionals who may need to train the teachers on the use of internet resources for optimum benefits. This finding shows that teachers may no longer prefer their colleagues as information sources as reported by Landrum et al (2002), but resonates with the findings of Williams and Coles (2007), who reported that secondary school teachers now prefer information that are organized, brief and easy to read.

The study also revealed that secondary school teachers in the local government area mostly consult information resources in preparation for classroom teaching and to obtain examination/assignment questions. This finding may foretell the reason why the teachers are now using ICT facilities more frequently as revealed in the study. As noted by Meyen et al (2003) and the report of the Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education (2006), teachers prefer to obtain information that can make them more effective in their jobs. Thus, the higher need for information to prepare for classroom teaching could actually be to make them more efficient. This finding confirms an earlier report by Makewa et al (2013), who hinted that secondary school teachers considered ICT to be important in their job. However, the finding does not fall in line with the finding of Yunus et al (2013) who stated that the use of ICT in Malaysian secondary schools in is very low.

Furthermore, the frequent use of ICT among the teachers could explain the fact revealed that it was easier for them to obtain information for knowledge update and prepare for classroom teaching. ICT use facilitate access to information in unconventional ways. However, the challenges to accessing information as revealed by the study include the lack of functional libraries in the schools and high cost of internet. These may actually hinder their use of internet/ICT for easy access to information. These challenges are similar to the ones reported by Hassan and El-Rify (2012), and earlier by Junior and Countinho (2008).

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings of this study, it was concluded that secondary school teachers in Abeokuta North Local Government Area mostly concentrate on the use of textbooks, reference sources (such as dictionary) and internet to obtain needed information for their teaching activities. Also, the major teaching purposes that teachers consult information resources for are to prepare for classroom teaching and to obtain questions for examination/assignment. Furthermore, secondary school teachers are now availing themselves of ICT technologies to ease their access to information, but are confronted with the challenges of lack of functional libraries and high cost of internet in actualizing this.

In order to enhance secondary school teachers' use of information resources for better teaching and impact, the researchers recommended the following:

The government of Ogun State, through the State's Ministry of Education, should address the provision, improvement, maintenance and sustenance of well-stocked school libraries or media resource centres to the benefit of the teachers in state-owned secondary schools in the local government area.

Since the teachers are interested in using ICT for accessing information, the State Library Board should provide services that will offer ongoing training for secondary school teachers in the local government area on the use of ICT and its resources.

Secondary school administrator should confront the challenge of non-functional libraries by innovating means of stocking their school libraries and designing programmes that will enhance their use for better service delivery among the teachers.

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