

1

Teacher's Experience and Willingness to be Evaluated for Accountability in Achieving the Millennium Development Goal in Cross River State

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Abstract

The study examined teachers' experience and their willingness to be evaluated for accountability towards excellence in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. The paper specially examined the influence of levels of teaching experience as well as levels of teachers' willingness to be evaluated for their professional accountability. Data, were collected through questionnaire instrument which was served on a sample of 480 out of 5, 7 7 2 teachers in the 2 5 3 senior secondary schools in the state. The subjects' responses to the questionnaire items were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses

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were tested with ANOVA statistic at 0.05 alpha levels. The study revealed that highly experienced teacher and those who indicated high level of willingness to be evaluated, have high tendency for accountability in the school system than the less experienced ones and less willing ones to be evaluated. Some recommendations were made for teachers to be more accountable.

Humans are innately endowed with progressive tendencies of always wanting to improve present situation(s) for possible excellence in their endeavours. This applies to teacher education in which efforts are being made by stakeholders towards achievement of excellence in the profession, and for better quality of school products. In view of this, the study explored the connection existing among teachers' experience, teacher-evaluation, and accountability of stakeholders (teachers) for a possible achievement of excellence in the school system. The emphasis on teacher-education was based on an adage that the quality of educational system cannot rise above the quality of teachers (FME, 2004), an adage that remains applicable, and very true.

Durosaro (2010) asserted that the concept of teacher education is based on the need to transmit and assimilate the beliefs about the world, develop attitude towards it, and acquire some fundamental skills required for solving practical disturbing issues which invariably, accounted for the institution of the culture of education. Thus, the onerous responsibility of initiating, instructing and transmitting what is required to be transmitted has deliberately made the functional role of the teacher very crucial and indispensable. In a similar vein, Wikipedia (2007) referred to teacher education as a body of knowledge, policies and procedures designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitude, behaviours and skills they require in the classroom, the school and other wider community. These explanations of teacher education point to the development of each person who by interest or otherwise finds himself in the area of transmitting knowledge to other person (s). Again, it implies that such an individual has defined responsibility. Of course, the ethics of every profession demands accountability for assigned responsibility.

Although the definitions of accountability vary, in the context of education, the term generally refers to the notion that teachers, administrators and even students themselves must be held responsible or accountable for the results of their efforts. This means that school accountability involves holding personnel liable for what takes place in school, and for what does not take place in school, though expected (Joshua, 1998).

The public has become increasingly inquisitive about the quality of school products. Stakeholders in schools and the general public have had reasons to keep thinking about the declining and deteriorating results from schools in terms of academic performance in Nigeria and across the globe. A new dawn of awareness is generally unfolding as concerned citizens are persistently demanding the school to give account

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of its stewardship in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. Thus, accountability movement has widened in its scope and has come to stay.

In relating accountability movement to evaluation in teachers and teacher education towards excellence, Darling-Hammond, L; Wise, A. E. and Pease, S. R. (1983: 285), as cited in Joshua (1998:25) started as follows:

The demand for accountability in education has shifted from broad issues of finance and program management to specific concerns about the quality of classroom teaching and teachers. These concerns have led to a resurgence of interests in evaluating teacher and the development of new systems for teacher evaluation

Cardina and Roden (1998) and Ornstein and Levine (2006), reported a strong desire by researchers for teacher-evaluation to enhance professional growth and learning and to raise standard. They asserted that to improve the teaching force, effort has to focus on testing and evaluating of pre-service teachers, new teachers and even the experienced teachers. They added that reform efforts in many states and local districts in USA have included particular methods of planning and delivering instruction. Accordingly, these teachers are evaluated, in large part, by their ability to fellow these standard methods. The methods included model' lesson execution. The authority of each school was saddled with this aspect of teacher evaluation (Ornstein and Levine 2006).

Accountability movement is a product of two theories tagged Theory 1 and Theory 11 by Aderounmu and Ehiametalor (1985). Theory 1 which has its root in business, military and industry holds that accountability is an authoritarian process to be imposed on schools by law. It assumes that teachers and administrators are not trust worthy in their tasks, and that learners if given the option would choose not to learn. This theory leads to seeking for result oriented data such as hard data on teacher performance, his time on duty, learners' standardized achievement scores and grade point averages. In this theory, teachers are expected to give account by showing 'how much learning' if any, through their contributions.

Theory II of accountability which is more humanistic in nature advocates a total enfranchisement, equal rights, autonomy, individual differences and so on. It assumes that people can be trusted; students can learn better in a condusive environment, within which self-evaluation, independence and creativity among others are facilitated. Accordingly, theory 11 leads to seeking for person-oriented data and centres on consumer choice. In this theory, the teachers are evaluated by themselves, peers, superiors, and subordinates including students who describe the ways the teachers perform in terms of initiative, professional competence and school relationships with others. Disparities, when and where identified, are pointed out for possible improvement (Joshua, 1998).

Statement of the Problem

The persistent production of poor quality students in secondary school related examinations in Nigeria over the years has been a source of concern to parents, school administrators, the government and the general public in view of the significant and fundamental role of secondary school education in human capacity building in the country and across the world (The Nation, 2010). Several negative forces have been blamed for the continuous, daunting challenges in the nation's secondary school sector. Research studies (Darling-Hammond, et al 1983; Joshua, 1998; Ornstein and Levine, 2006; and Durosaro, 2010) indicate strong relationship among accountability in the school system teachers' experience, teacher-evaluation and achievement of school target.

In view of this, it is pertinent to ask; what relationships exist between teachers' experience and their accountability? How does teacher evaluation relate with their professional accountability? How does students' evaluation of teachers relate to school accountability?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship that exists among teachers' professional variables and their accountability for excellent result from the school system in Cross River State (CRS).

Specifically, the study aimed at finding out if:

- i. a teacher's teaching experience relates with his/her accountability for excellence in Cross River State School system.
- ii. teacher's willingness to be evaluated by his/her students relates with his/her accountability for excellence in Cross River State school system.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study

- i. To what extent does the level of a teacher's teaching experience relate with his/her accountability in Cross River State Secondary School System towards the achievement of MDGS?
- ii. In what way does a teacher's level of willingness to be evaluated by his/her student relate with his/her accountability in Cross River State secondary school system towards the achievement of MDGS?

Statement of Hypothesis

The two research questions have been converted into two corresponding null hypotheses which further guided the study.

1. There is no significant influence of a teacher's level of experience on his/her accountability in Cross River State secondary school system towards the achievement of MDGS.

2. There is no significant influence of a teacher's level of willingness to be evaluated by students on his/her accountability in Cross River State secondary school system towards the achievement of MDGS.

Methodology

A survey design was adopted for the study. This design was chosen because of the spatial distribution of the population and the area of the study which covered the entire state of Cross River. The target population of the study was all the secondary school teachers in Cross River State public schools, which numbered 5, 7 7 2 (males 3, 3 7 3 and females 2, 3 9 9) as at March 2011, (S S M B, 2011). Through a stratified random sampling technique 24 schools and 480 teachers were proportionately selected. The stratification was based on senatorial districts and rural/urban localities.

The researchers constructed a questionnaire title Teacher Opinion on Experience, Evaluation, and Accountability Questionnaire (T O E E A Q) for data collection. The instrument had three sections A, B and C. section A centred on socio-demographic information of the respondents, section B elicited information on their teaching experience and Section C which was divided into subsections Ci and Cii sought respondents' information on their willingness to be evaluated and their accountability. Sections B and C were structured in Likert-type scale of strongly Agree (SA)-4points; Agree (A)-3points; Disagree (D)-2 points and strongly; Disagree (SD)-1 point.

Three experts in measurement and evaluation helped in validating the instrument. The final copy of the questionnaire was trial tested on fifty (50) secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom State for its reliability. The Cronbach Alpha statistics was adopted to determine its reliability which was .81, an index considered quite high.

Data Collection Procedure and Analysis

The researchers were assigned to school zones for the purpose of administering the questionnaire. A two week interval was given to the respondents to react to the items so as to avoid much pressure. Some copies were however collected that day while the remaining copies were collected at the end of the two week period. With this arrangement, all the 480 copies of the instrument were returned. The responses to the items were tallied and the frequencies of ratings were used to compute the mean and standard deviation for the research questions. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for testing the two null hypotheses at .05 alpha levels.

Results

The results of data analysis are presented in tables according to the research questions and the hypotheses as follows: hypothesis 1/research question 1.

There is no significant influence of a teacher's level of experience on his/her accountability in Cross River State secondary school system. And the research question: To what extent does the level of a teacher's teaching experience relate with his/her accountability in Cross River State secondary school system?

Table 1: A Summary of ANOVA table on the relationship between a teacher’s levels of (Low, Moderate and High) experience and his/her accountability in the secondary school system.

Group	N	\bar{X}	SD	
Low	180	2.65	.82	
Moderate	160	2.78	.90	
High	140	2.96	.91	
Source of Variation	SS	Df	Ms	F
Between group	39.4	2	19.7	179
Within group	51.4	477	0.11	
Total	90.8	479		

Significant at 0.05 levels, critical F 2,477=3.02

Hypothesis II and Research Question II

There is no significant influence of a teacher’s level of willingness to be evaluated by students on his/her accountability in Cross River State secondary school system towards the achievement of MDGS. And the research question II: In What way does a teacher’s level of willingness to be evaluated by his/her student relate with his/her accountability in Cross River State secondary school system?

Table 2: A Summary of ANOVA table on the relationship between a teacher’s levels of (High, Moderate and Low) willingness to be evaluated by students and his/her accountability in Cross River State secondary school system.

Group	N	\bar{X}	SD	
High	180	3.01	.82	
Moderate	160	3.15	.86	
Low	140	3.36	.98	
Source of Variation	SS	Df	Ms	F
Between group	9.72	2	4.86	10.13
Within group	227.93	477	0.48	
Total	237.65	479		

Significant at 0.05 levels, critical F 2,477=3.02

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that secondary school teachers in Cross River State have a general opinion that the level of a teacher's experience relates to his/her accountability on the teaching job for excellent performance. This is evidence by the result of the group mean on Table 1 and the results of the priori Scheffe test which show that Group 3 (ie. Highly experienced group) mean value of 2.96 was the highest. It is significant, which suggests that the teachers with high teaching experience (15 years and above) tended to be more accountable, thus are likely to produce better results in public secondary schools in the state. Again, in response to the research question, the finding showed that teachers' teaching experience is highly related to their accountability in the secondary school system. The finding conform with those of Aderounmu and Ehiamentalor (1985) and Ornstein and Levine (2006) that experience, when combined with other variables such as good knowledge of the subject matter makes the teacher competent, accountable and a high performer.

One probable reason for the low mean score among the less experienced teachers in this study could be due to the fact that a good number of the young teachers have not made up their minds whether to or not to remain in the profession. This is indicated in their response to questionnaire item 6 (I am teaching now pending the availability of any other job).

From hypothesis II and research question II whose result is shown on Table 2, the findings are that teachers in secondary schools in Cross River State generally opined that teachers who accept to be evaluated by their students and with their students' performance tend to be quite accountable and are likely to record high standard performance in their profession. The calculated $F = 179$ is greater than the critical $F = 3.02$ thus, there is a significant relationship between levels of willingness of teachers to be evaluated by their students and their accountability in schools. This also answers the research question II; that teachers who have higher willingness to be evaluated by their students are more accountable than those who show low willingness to be evaluated.

This finding collaborates that of Darling–Hammond, et al (1983); Darling-Hammond (1998); Cardina and Rosen (1998); Joshua (1998) and Ornstein and Levine (2006) that students evaluation of their teacher and the use of students' performance to assess a teacher make teaching and learning effective and efficient. The probable reason for the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching and learning in the use of student-teacher evaluation is that the students are very close to their teachers and tend to know their strengths and weakness very well.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study it is concluded that there was a significant difference in teachers' accountability tendency in highly experienced teachers, moderately experienced teachers and the inexperience teachers in secondary schools in

Cross River State. There is also a significant relationship between teachers' levels of willingness to be evaluated and their accountability tendency for excellent delivery of service and for greater attainment of MDGS.

Many young teachers see teaching job as a transitional means of getting a more lucrative job and they see teaching experience as useless and time wasting. A good number of the non-professional teachers perceived teacher evaluation by colleagues and students as humiliating and therefore, exhibited negative tendencies towards it. They preferred to be evaluated by their bosses only.

Recommendations

By showing willingness to be evaluated, the teachers are invariably accepting practices that produce excellence in the school system. Experience in teaching and teacher-education should be encouraged.

The teaching profession should be made more attractive so that teachers will be willing to 'stay' and accumulate experience on the job to enable them render better services. This will likely reduce or eliminate the present attitudinal tendency of making teaching job transitional to 'better' jobs.

To ensure high standard of performance by teachers, teacher education in Cross River State should stress the need for student teacher evaluation and the school authority and teachers should see evaluation as a corrective measure in teaching and learning in order to be more accountable in the school system. It is believed, if the recommendations are conscientiously implemented, the attainment of Millennium Development Goals in education will be high in Cross River State.

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Teacher's Experience and Willingness to be Evaluated for Accountability in Achieving the Millennium Development Goal in Cross River State

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