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## Table of Contents

Human Resource Factors and Employability of Educational Management Undergraduates in Southwest, Nigeria <b>Ojoogun, Kayode Musibau &amp; Ileuma, Senimetu .....</b>	<b>1-20</b>
Work Experience and Competence as Indicators of Performance Effectiveness of Editors in Book Publishing Firms in Southwestern Nigeria <b>Adigun, Olubunmi Racheal &amp; Akangbe, Clement Adeniyi .....</b>	<b>21-43</b>
Teachers' Education, Attitude, Beliefs and Effective Classroom Management in the 21st Century <b>Okenwa-Ojo, M. &amp; Yusuff, R.O.....</b>	<b>44-54</b>
Use of Internet Search Engines by Lecturers and Instructors (Academics) In Oyo State College of Education, Lanlate <b>Oladapo, Oludare Samuel .....</b>	<b>55-71</b>
A Survey of the Impact of Skills Acquisition on Job Creation and Poverty Reduction among Youths In Ondo State, Nigeria <b>Itodo, Simon Ilesanmi; Amosun, Peter Adewale &amp; Morohunmubo, Omosehin Foluke .....</b>	<b>72-86</b>
Effect of Environmental Factor Variation on Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students in Adamawa State, Nigeria <b>Takwate, Kwaji Tizhe &amp; Iranda, Jacob Iranda .....</b>	<b>87-99</b>
Compensation Management and Teacher Job Effectiveness in Private Secondary Schools in Ogun State <b>Garuba, Qudus Ajibola; Saliu, Muminat Morenikeji Maradesa, Wakeel Olalekan .....</b>	<b>100-116</b>
Undergraduates' Entrepreneurial Intentions and Contributions of University Entrepreneurial Programme in Oyo State, Nigeria: Implications on Japa Syndrome <b>Gbadamosi, T. V. &amp; Adetunji, A. A.....</b>	<b>117-128</b>

Assessment of Principals' Conflict Management Strategies on Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools in Oyo Metropolis of Oyo State  
**Adeyemo, Adekola Oyebamiji & Isola, Aderonke Fausat ..... 129-143**

Poverty, Child Labour and Access to Schooling in Oyo State  
**Adeagbo, Joseph Olusegun & Mosobalaje, Risikat Olaitan ..... 144-166**

**Volume 24, No. 2, June 2023.....167**

School Plant Construction, Home and Teacher Factors as Determinants of Students Academic Performance in Oyo State: Implications for Planning  
**Ayoola, Olubunmi Adedunke; Oyeromi, Samson Olumuyiwa & Ilesanmi, Morenike ..... 169-181**

The Role of Adult Entrepreneurship Education for Poverty Reduction in Post COVID– 19 Era in Nigeria  
**Okenwa-Ojo, M. & Yusuff, R.O. & Adewole, A.A..... 182-194**

Do the Information and Communication Technology (Internet and Phones) Make Earth to Shrink?  
**Oladapo, Oludare Samuel & Oladipo, Michael Olukayode ..... 195-207**

Government Support Services and Teacher Task Performance in Oyo State Public Secondary Schools, Nigeria  
**Faremi, Sunday James ..... 208-227**

Selection Process and Teachers' Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Osun State, Nigeria  
**Ibrahim, Muinat Abiodun & Adebayo, Monsurat Folake ..... 228-239**

Effect of Inquiry-Based Teaching Strategy on Junior Secondary School Students' Performance in Mathematics in Odogbolu Local Government Area of Ogun State  
**Yusuf, Sikiru Adewale & Aminu, Lateef O..... 240-251**

## **TEACHERS' EDUCATION, ATTITUDE, BELIEFS AND EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper surveys teachers' education and their attitude and beliefs towards effective classroom management in the 21st century. It started with an introduction which stated that education is the important tool for the development of any society and an instrument a society can utilise to solve her problems. This followed a brief literature review on teachers' education and their attitude towards effective classroom management. A brief discussion was given on the development of teacher leadership quality for the 21st century. Some basic mistakes made by teachers when implementing classroom management strategies were discussed. Teachers' teaching efficacy was emphasised. Attributes of learning environment and good classroom management for teachers was discussed. Conclusion and recommendations were given which include that all stakeholders in education see teachers as agent of innovation because innovation is very important for generating new sources of growth through improved efficiency and productivity; thus teachers should be well treated. Government at all level should intervene in the provision of infrastructure and other basic amenities that would make life more meaningful in the teaching and learning in the classroom.*

**Keywords:** *Teachers, Education; Attitude, Beliefs, Classroom Management*

### **Introduction**

As the development of any nation depends largely on the quality and quantity of education of that nation, education is the best legacy a nation can give to her citizens. It is the important tool for the development of any society and an instrument a society can utilise to

solve her problems. Yusuf (2010) inferred that education is the basic instrument of economic growth and technological advancement of any society. In the same way, it is broadly believed that the basis of any true development must start with the development of human resources. Hence, much is said that formal education remains the vehicle for socio-economic, technological and social mobilisation of any society. It is in recognition of this that various governments commit much resources to ensure that provision of education for their citizens, and equally followed their policies towards ensuring that it is made accessible to the generality of their citizenry. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was introduced by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1999 to meet demands for quality, strong access and equity to education for the total development of the individual. The reason is to enable the generality of the populace (whether poor, socially marginalised and vulnerable groups) to effectively develop their full capacities and potentials.

UNESCO (2004) stated that all nations should ensure that education is a right for all their citizens regardless of their locations, ethnicity or religion. In September 1990, Nigeria became a signatory to Jomtien declaration on Education For All (EFA). It was declared that learning begins at birth and therefore, early childhood education is essential component of basic education. The Federal Government of Nigeria introduced the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in 1990 to actualise the Jomtien declaration for the purpose of sustainable development. In the National Policy of Education (2004) it stated that basic education is the foundation upon which the rest of the educational system is built. Its objectives includes; to provide access to education to all children in every corner of the country and to inculcate in children permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively. So who are to effect these objectives? The teachers are the ones. They must be well trained and also be proficient in computer education in order to imbibe the new technologies and methodologies of the 21st century. They should also be vast in entrepreneurial skills development in order to train their students to become future teachers for effective and sustainable development.

Teachers are important instrument in education. They are the custodians of the educational and school systems. They are also the pillar on which the educational process is made. Teachers play a wide

role in the whims and caprices of the educational system. They could influence the teaching learning outcomes either positively or negatively for they determine the quality of instructional delivery and in addition influence equality education when it comes to implementation of the curriculum and educational policies. Onucha (2002) said that teachers are to be considered when addressing issues such as: quality education; quality delivery (teaching) quality context and quality learning outcomes. Teaching makes learning take place and teacher determines the quality of learning and instructions that would be given to learners. This should be the reason why teachers should be given adequate remuneration for effectiveness and efficiency in the educational and school system. That is why the National Policy on Education (2004) stated that no nation can arise above the quality of its teachers. Hence, this paper is written to show teachers education and their attitude and beliefs towards effective classroom management in the 21st century.

### **Teachers Education and Effective Classroom Management**

Teachers job have been linked to their attitude and beliefs towards their effective classroom management orientations. Martin, Yin and Baldwin (1998) asserted by Quadri (2021) inferred that teachers approaches towards managing their classroom vary as a function of their beliefs regarding the nature of appropriate and inappropriate behaviours, and how to control this reflects the extent to which teachers want to exercise control over students. These ranges from non-interventionist at one extreme to interventionists at the other, and interactionalists midway between them. Here, the teacher with the most experience and least discipline problem starts class quicker; spends less time talking; allots more time for actual student performance; and use more non-verbal cues for instruction, modelling and discipline. Good teachers create more active learning time with fewer interruptions, actively observes students from afar and use more non-verbal corrective feedback through the use of encouragement. For example, eye contact is used mostly for non-verbal communication.

Palumbo and Sancore (2007) said that classroom management is the open door that good teaching must walk through to establish itself in a classroom. Teachers with proper management skills focus on maximising the efficiency of the teaching process. The prescribed routines can be as simple as writing opinion instruction on a chalkboard

before the arrival of your students. This is to allow the students to immediately get to work while the teacher takes care of administrative duties. On the average, good organisation of instruction and students behaviour in the classroom saves thirty minutes of teaching time a day. Megableh, Yusuf, Hawamdeh and Ali (2007) agreed that consistent daily procedures can prevent losing valuable time in repetitive and non-educational administrative actions.

Chiamaka (2021) inferred that a 21st -century teacher must be tech-savvy. This means that he or she must be familiar with the different technological tools available in navigating his or her work. It is sad to note that many teachers in the 21st century do not know how to use a laptop or desktop. Some teachers use their smartphones solely to make and answer calls, check out facebook posts and respond to whatsapp post. This is pathetic and laughable. This is because teaching in the 21st century is quite different from teaching in the centuries before it. Teachers in the 21st century are learning facilitators rather than instructors because the role of teachers has become wider than it used to be in the past. Chiamaka (2021) further explained that a 21st century teacher must be involved in continuous professional development. Here, a 21st century teacher must always update his or her knowledge through the attendance of conferences be it virtual or physical. This is an era of knowledge, hence, developing a habit of reading books would be a relevant skill now as a teacher to be effective and current in knowledge dispensation, not only on his or her area of specialisation but on other areas. Investing in professional development would be also an additional advantage to the teacher teaching in the 21st century. Duke (2007) equally assigned a great deal of importance to the support system in place for teachers, suggesting that individuals entering programmes be subjected to more real life experiences and training.

The type of teachings needed now requires teachers to be high-level knowledge workers who always upgrade their own professional knowledge and equally that of their profession. In order to attract and develop knowledge teachers, education systems need to transform from the leadership and work organisation of their schools to an environment in which professional norms of management complement bureaucratic and administrative forms of control. Taking note that high quality education that goes with professional work, and with effective



systems of teachers, evaluation also goes with different career paths and career diversity for teachers. Hence, the 21st – century teacher has his or her role redefined. Weistein, Tomlinson-Clark and Curran, (2004) stated that definition and expectations of appropriate behaviour are culturally influenced, and conflicts are likely to occur when teachers and students come from different cultural backgrounds. To Voltz and Scott (2003) teachers should not be biased in misreading behaviours or communication patterns of culturally and linguistically diversified students (e.g. Igbo, Yoruba, Efik, Hausa, Fulani, etc) as this can make teachers who are unprepared not to meet the educational needs of these students.

### **Developing Teacher Leadership Quality for the 21st Century**

Many countries in the world including Nigeria are trying to undertake wide range of practices to better prepare and develop teachers for the higher educational demands of life and work in the 21st century. These practices incorporates; coordinating the curriculum, teaching programme, monitoring and evaluating teaching practice, promoting teachers professional development, regular evaluation, performance appraisal, professional development planning, promotion, in-service training, classroom observation, sharing resources and ideas in seminars, workshop and conferences. All these have helped teachers to face the many demands on their time and energy. It has also provided mutual support to cope with challenges. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2011), gave the most effective way of developing teachers leadership tomorrow's education system as follows:

- i. Prepare and develop teachers using innovative approaches that address to roles, responsibilities, purpose of education and use latest technologies to achieve intended outcomes.
- ii. Produce teachers who work to build student centred education with the capacity for high performance and continuous improvement towards the end.
- iii. System approach with wide perspective, so that the programme is aligned with the larger goals and processes of the system concerning school improvement, student performance and enhanced efficiency and effectiveness.

Development of teachers should equally include; networking, collaborative problem-solving, coaching and mentoring new appointed teachers to have access to the counsel and advice of their senior colleagues that have more experience. Basic training or pre-service arrangement is a mandatory requirement programme that always leads to specialised qualification for teaching professionalisation ranging from Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), Bachelor of Education (B.Ed), Master of Education (M.Ed.), Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) and Doctors of Philosophy in Education (Ph.D). Taking into consideration that it is true that many teachers teaching in the 21st century are digital immigrants who are teaching digital natives, the fact remains that they are professionally required to become tech-savvy in order to meet the needs of their learners. For examples, the world-wide pandemic that forced everyone indoors in 2020 i.e. (COVID-19) whereby a lot of schools were forced to shut down while others with tech-savvy educators continued with teaching and learning virtually.

### **Some Basic Mistakes made by Teachers when Implementing Classroom Management Strategies**

In an attempt to maintain order in the classroom, a teacher sometimes could actually make the problem worse. Hence, it is important to consider some of the basic mistakes commonly made when implementing classroom behaviour management strategies. To Barbetta and Norona (2005) a common mistake made by teachers is to define the problem behaviour by how it looks without considering its function. For example, interventions are more likely to be effective when they are individualised to address the specific function of the problem behaviour. Two students with similar looking misbehaviour may need entirely different intervention strategies if their behaviours are serving different functions. Teacher need to understand that they need to be able to change the ways they do things from year to year as the students also change. Not every approach works for every student. Hence, teachers should be flexible. Another common mistake is for the teacher to become constantly frustrated and negative when an approach is not working. This may infuriate the teacher to raise his or her own voice or increase adverse consequences in an attempt to make the approach work. This type of interaction may hinder the teacher-student relationship. Rather than allowing this to happen, it is always

better to simply try a new approach. Barbette and Norona (2005) infer that inconsistency in expectations and consequences is an additional mistake that can lead to dysfunction in the classroom. For students to understand that rules would be enforced, the teacher must be consistent in their expectations and consequences to help ensure that students would enforce the rules. Hence, teachers should communicate expectations to students clearly and sufficiently.

### **Teachers Teaching Efficacy**

Teachers' efficacy is teacher confidence in their ability to promote students learning. To Bandura (1997) quoted by Quadri (2021) say that teacher efficacy plays a key role in classroom learning and it is developed through mastery experiences during teaching practice and the graduation year. Bandura says that efficacy belief exists and occurs very well along different dimensions, which are;

- i. Domain of activities: A teacher can consider himself or herself very competent in a certain domain and less competent in another. A domain can include many of few activities.
- ii. Performance level: A teacher can consider himself or herself quite competent to perform a task to an average level while considering himself or herself less competent to perform exceptionally well. A performance level can be challenging to high or low degree.
- iii. Vary in strength: The higher we rate our competence at achieving a particular outcome, the more likely it is that we will achieve this outcome. Thus, teacher efficacy is the belief that teachers can have a positive impact on teachers commitment, beliefs, practices and job security. Helsin and Klehe (2006) says that self-efficacy causes people to strive to improve their strategies, collect relevant information, make sound decision and take appropriate actions, particularly when they are under pressure.

### **Attributes of Learning Environment and Good Classroom Management for Teachers**

For good classroom delivery and quality assurance of teaching process, classroom management and professional continuation in the 21st century, the following are the attributes of a good learning

environment and teachers by the OECD's comparative review of innovative learning environments concludes that, in order to be most effective, learning environment should:

- I. Make learning central, encourage engagement, and be the player where students come to understand themselves as learners;
- II. Ensure that learning is social and often collaborative;
- III. Be highly attuned to students motivation and the importance of emotions.
- IV. Be accurately sensitive to individual differences, including in prior knowledge.
- V. Demanding of every student, without overloading students;
- VI. Use assessments that emphasise formative feedback; and
- VII. Promote connections across emphasise activities and subjects, both in and out of school.

All these attributes form a demanding framework on which teachers' professionalism is based. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) comparative review also emphasises that:

- i. Teachers need to be well versed in the subjects they teach in order to be adapted to using different methods and, if necessary, changing their approaches to optimise learning. This includes content-specific strategies and methods to teach specific content.
- ii. Teachers need a rich repertoire of teaching strategies, the ability to combine approaches, and the knowledge of how and when to use certain methods and strategies.
- iii. The strategies used should include direct, whole-group teaching, guided discovery, group work, and the facilitation of self-study and individual discovery. They should also include personalised feedback.
- iv. Teachers need to be able to work in highly collaborative ways, working with other teachers, professionals and para-professionals within the same organisation, or with individuals in other organisation, networks of professional communities and different partnership arrangements, which may include mentoring teachers.

- v. Teachers need to acquire strong skills in technology and the use of digital resources in their teaching and use information management system to track students learning.
- vi. Teachers need to develop the capacity to help design, lead, manage and plan environments in collaboration with others.
- vii. Last but not the least; teachers need to reflect on their practices in order to learn from their experience.

### **Conclusion**

Teachers job have been linked to their attitude and beliefs towards their effective classroom management orientations. Teachers' approach towards managing their classroom vary as a function of their beliefs regarding the nature of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, and how to control this reflects the extent to which teachers want to exercise control over students.

Classroom management is the open door that good teaching must walk through to establish itself in a classroom. The 21st century teachers could expect that what they taught would last for a lifetime of their students. But in a fast changing world producing more of the same education will not suffice to address the challenges of the future. The most challenging dilemma of teachers today is that of routine cognitive skills, which are skills that are easiest to teach and easiest to test. They are equally the skills that are simple to digitise, automate and outsource. The type of teaching needed now requires teachers to be high-level knowledge workers who always upgrade their own professional knowledge and equally that of their profession.

### **Recommendations**

- All stakeholders in education see teachers as agent of innovation because innovation is very important for generating new sources of growth through improved efficiency and productivity; thus, teachers should be well treated.
- Government at all level should intervene in the provision of infrastructure and other basic amenities that would make life more meaningful in the teaching and learning in the classroom.
- Government should transform the work organisation in the institutions replacing administrative forms of management with professionals' norms that provide the status pay, professional

autonomy and accountability, and the high quality training and responsibility that go with professional work.

- Government should provide effective systems of social dialogue, and appealing forms of employment that balance flexibility with job security, and grant sufficient authority for school to manage and deploy their human resources.
- Every socialised institutions such as schools, family, mass media, religious institutions must equally play their parts by monitoring and encouraging good values and virtues of their teachers.
- Academic institutions especially the teachers must wake up to their responsibilities and teach what they are supposed to teach. And also function as agencies of positive socialisation rather than polluting the mind of the learners.

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