

The Efficacy of Social Studies Teachers' Competence in the Use of Playway Method in Lower Primary Schools in Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study assessed Social Studies teachers' competence in the use of playway method in lower primary Social Studies classroom in Osun State, Nigeria. It examined their knowledge, competence and factors that might influence their competence in the use of playway method in Social Studies classroom. The study adopted qualitative descriptive research design. Nursery and Primary school teachers in Osun State constituted the population for the study. One hundred and fifty-six (156) teachers were sampled using stratified sampling technique based on rural and urban schools as strata. A questionnaire titled Teachers' Use of Playway Method of Teaching (TUPMT) was developed and validated before use by the investigator. Three research questions were asked and answered, and three research hypotheses were tested and verified. Among others, the results showed that Social Studies teachers possessed only fair knowledge of Playway method. They equally possessed very high level of competence in the use of playway method. However, their gender has no significant influence on their competences. The study recommended among others, that teachers should be very fast and knowledgeable in the use of playway method of teaching which could be enhanced through self effort, seminars, symposia, workshop and in-service training to mention but a few.

Keywords: Teachers' competences, playway method, lower primary schools.

1. Introduction

Education being an indispensable tool in nation building is a process of systematic training and instruction designed to transmit knowledge and acquisition of skill, potential and abilities which enables an individual to contribute efficiently to the growth and development of his society and nation. It involves all round development of an individual physically, socially, morally, intellectually and mentally, (Osakwe, 2006). Nigeria as a nation is diversified in its peoples, culture, traditions, economics activities, physical environment and aspirations. The relevance of Social Studies is primarily to help the individual to look at his society and to understand problems for which he should help to seek solutions. In this study, emphasis is placed on Social Studies teachers because Social Studies is one of the compulsory subject taught at lower primary schools in Osun State. Not only that, Social Studies as a subject in any given society takes into cognizance the peculiarities of the society for which it is prepared. It is deliberately planned and positively planned to positively influence learners' understanding of their immediate environment.

Playway method is one of the effective strategies for teaching and learning especially in lower primary schools. The Federal Government of Nigeria recognized the intrinsic values of play in the lives of children when emphasized its use in the teaching of children as stated in the National Policy of Education (2004). The early proponent of this unique method of teaching was Plato, one of the most celebrated Greek philosophers. Others include Fredrick Froebel and Maria Montessori. They recognized that the child is naturally endowed and through play they learn a lot.

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Play gives significant impact on children's physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and socio development (Norhashimah & Yahya, 2003). Many experts such as Lester, and Russell, (2008); Sharma, (2013); Popoola, (2014) as well as Dushi, (2016) in education have agreed upon play as a vital medium to promote children's development. Play in general should be spontaneous and actively engaging. Play is the best thing that teachers and parents can plan for young children. They learn their environment and how it works during play. Play helps them to understand different roles people have in their lives. For instance, through play they can learn the task of a mother. Therefore play can be considered as one of the strategic approaches that can be utilized to stimulate and foster young children's learning process (Abu Bakar, 2010).

However, it should be noted that how better a method of teaching is, depends largely on its user which is teacher and it requires competencies. Teacher competences may be viewed from ones knowledge, skills and behaviour. It is therefore essential that Social Studies teacher is expected to be competent in his/her discipline and the use of playway method. According to Darling-Hammond (2006) " The task of a teacher is closely tied to the nature of the classroom. Today's classroom call for teachers to prepare virtually all students for higher order thinking and performance skills once reserved to only a few"

Low, Taylor, Joseph, and Atienza (2009) were equally of the views that in this 21st century, teacher needs to develop a holistic array of skills for teaching and thinking, administration and management as well as knowledge of self and pupils, community and pedagogy among many others.

Statement of the Problem

Various researches had been carried out on different instructional methods at different levels such as lecture method, field trip, group discussion to mention but a few. Play is considered as the most appropriate approach and medium to develop language skill among preschool children. But still there are arising matters pertaining to teachers' competence in its use. It is therefore of interest to the researcher to assess the competence of lower primary schools Social Studies teachers in the use of playway method in bid to improve the kind of education given to the preschoolers

Objectives of the Study

The study assessed Social Studies teachers' competence on the use of playway method in lower primary schools. Specifically, the study examined:

- (i) teachers' knowledge of playway method of teaching
- (ii) the level of teachers' competence in the use of playway method of teaching
- (iii) the factors that may influence teachers' competence in the use of playway method

Research Questions

In order to serve as a guide to the study, the following research questions were raised:

- (i) Do lower primary school Social Studies teachers have relevant knowledge in playway method of teaching?
- (ii) Are social Studies teachers competent in the use of playway method of teaching?
- (iii) What are the factors that may influence teachers' competence in the use of playway method of teaching?

Research Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in teacher competency of playway method of teaching based on age

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in teacher competency of playway method of teaching based on sex

Significance of the Study

The findings of study will broaden the horizon of instructors; expose them to the need to be competent in the use of their teaching strategy. The study will help curriculum developers and critics to emphasis the need for teachers to be competent in the kind of instructional strategy to be used in the inculcation of knowledge at the early childhood education level.

Scope of the Study

The study covered 10 nursery and primary schools in 30 Local Government Areas in Osun State, Nigeria.

Methods

The study employed descriptive research design. The population for the study comprised of Social Studies teachers in lower primary schools in Osun State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 10 schools from the 30 LGAs in Osun State of which six of them were public and remaining four private. From each of the nursery and primary school at least one or two Social Studies teachers were selected using purposive sampling technique, that is, only Social Studies teachers were sampled. In all, 156 Social Studies teachers constituted the sample size for the study. A questionnaire titled Teachers' Use of Playway Method of Teaching (TUPMT) was developed by the investigator. It has four sections. Section A was on Socio- Demographic data, Section B consisted of 28 items on playway method of teaching, Section C consisted of 15 items that focused on lower primary schools Social Studies teachers competences in playway method of teaching while Section D consisted of 10 items on factors affecting teachers' Use of playway method of teaching in the teaching of Social Studies in lower primary schools. The instrument was validated before used. A value of 0.910 was obtained using Cronbach's alpha. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentages, relative significance index, t-test, and ANOVA statistics.

Results

Research Question 1: Do lower primary school Social Studies teachers' have relevant knowledge in playway method of teaching?

To answer this research question, the teachers' response to section B of the questionnaire was scored in such a way that an "SA" response is allotted 4, "A" 3 and "D" was scored 2 while "SD" response was scored 1. The scorings were transposed for negative items 11, 13, 14, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24 and 25. The resulting scores were summed and used to build a measure of teachers' knowledge of playway method. The maximum score on this measure was 103 while the lowest score was 65 with a mean value of 90.43 and standard deviation of 8.35. Those who scored 81 or less (1 standard deviation below the mean) were said to possess poor knowledge of playway method of teaching while those who score 82 to 99 (1 standard deviation above the mean) were said to possess fair knowledge and those who score above 99 (1 standard deviation above the mean) were said to possess good knowledge of playway method of teaching. These categories were given a descriptive in Table 1

Table 1: Teachers' Knowledge of playway method of teaching

	Frequency	Percent
Poor knowledge	25	16.0
Fair knowledge	117	75.0
Good knowledge	14	9.0
Total	156	100.0

Table 1 shows the teachers' knowledge of playway method of teaching. From the Table 1, it can be seen that most of the teachers (75%) possess only fair knowledge of playway method while 16% possess poor knowledge. Only 9% of the respondents were found to possess good knowledge of playway method of teaching.

Question 2: Are Social Studies teachers' competence in the use of playway method of teaching?

To answer this research question, the teachers' responses to section "C" of the questionnaire was scored in such a way that an "A" response is allotted 5, "S" was scored 4, "O" was scored 3, "R" was scored 2 while an "N" response was scored 1. The scoring was transposed for the only negative item 10. The resulting scores were cumulated and used to build a measure of teachers' competence in the use of playway method. The maximum score on this measure was 75 while the lowest score was 5 with a mean value of 63.84 and standard deviation of 10.35. those who scored 29 or less (less than 40%) were said to have low level of competence in the use of playway method of teaching while those who scored 30 or 44(40% to less than 60%) were said to possess moderate level of competence while those who scored 45 to 60 (60% to less than 80%) were said to have high level of competence and those who score above 60(more than 80%) were said to possess very high level of competence in the use of playway method of teaching. These categories were given a descriptive analysis and the result was presented in Table 2

Table 2: Teachers' level of competence in the use of playway method

	Frequency	Percent
Low	3	1.9
Moderate	2	1.3
High	28	17.9
Very High	123	78.8
Total	156	100.0

Table 2: shows the teachers' level of competence in the use of playway method of teaching. From the table it can be seen that most of the teachers (78.8%) possessed very high level of competence in the use of playway method while 17.9% possess high level. Only 1.3% of the respondents were found to possessed moderate level of competence in the use of playway method of teaching while 1.9% possessed low level of competence.

Research Question 3: What are the factors that may influence teachers' competence in the use of playway method?

To answer this research question, the teachers' responses to the section D of the questionnaire. The responses were subjected to descriptive analysis and the Relative significance Index was also computed. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Factors that influence teachers' competence in the use of playway method

S/ N		No Influence		Negligible		Moderate		Considerable		Great		RSI
		f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
1	Availability of play materials	0	0.0	28	17.9	6	3.8	8	5.1	114	73.5	0.866
2	Willingness of the school authority to allow the use of the method	0	0.0	9	5.8	19	12.2	44	28.2	84	53.8	0.860
3	Teachers' educational background	0	0.0	5	3.2	23	14.7	27	17.3	105	67.3	0.894
4	Teachers' experience in the use of different teaching methods	0	0.0	4	2.6	20	12.8	27	17.3	105	67.3	0.899
5	Time allotted to the teaching of the subject	2	1.3	2	1.3	29	18.6	52	33.3	71	45.5	0.841
6	Teachers' motivation (salary allowances, praises and so on)	10	6.4	12	7.7	6	3.8	17	10.8	111	71.2	0.865
7	Encouragement from parents	3	1.9	16	10.3	22	14.1	35	22.4	80	51.3	0.822
8	Willingness of the learners to engage in play			12	7.7	14	9.0	41	26.3	89	57.1	0.865
9.	The type of topic to be taught	4	2.6	12	7.7	28	17.9	46	29.5	66	42.3	0.803
10	The age of the learners	9	5.8	10	6.4	8	5.1	56	35.9	73	46.7	0.822

Table 3 shows the factors that influence teachers' competence the use of playway method as considered by the respondents. From the table, it can be seen that the most popular factor which affect teachers' use of playway method as identified by the respondents is "Teachers' experience in the use of different teaching methods" with RSI value 0.899.

Also 67.3% of respondent indicated that this factor greatly influence teachers' competence on the use of playway method include " teachers' educational background" and "Teachers' motivation (salary, allowances, praise and so on)" with RSI values of 0.894 and 0.865 respectively. According to the respondents, the least popular among the listed factors that may influence teachers' competence to use playway method is "The type of topic to be taught" with RSI value of 0.803. It was described to have great influence by only 42.3% of the respondents, while 29.5% indicated that it only has considerable influence.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference of gender on the teachers' competence to use play way method.

To test this research hypothesis the respondents' score on the measure of teachers' competence to use playway method was subjected to a t-test analysis with teachers' gender used as the differentiating variable. The result is presented in Table 4

Table 4 Influence of gender on teachers' competence to use playway method

Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	P
Male	46	64.7143	10.02224	0.690	154	>0.05
Female	110	63.1957	11.45295			

Table 4 shows the influence of gender on teachers' competence to use playway method. It can be seen from the table that the t-value obtained is 0.690 at $p = 0.491$. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that teachers' gender has no significant influence on their competence to use playway method such that any difference spotted can only be attributed to chance.

Hypothesis 2: Teachers educational qualification has no significant influence on their competence to use playway method.

To answer this research question the respondents' scores on the measure of teachers' competence to use playway method was subjected to Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with teachers' qualification used as the differentiating variable. The result it presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Influence of teachers' educational qualification on their competence to use playway method

	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	637.125	4	159.281	1.672	>0.05
Within Groups	14292.010	152	95.280		
Total	14929.135	156			

Table 5 shows the influence of educational qualification on teachers' competence to use playway. If can be seen from the table that the F-value obtained is 1.672 at $p = 0.159$. Since the p- value is greater than the 0.05, it can be concluded that teachers' educational qualification has no significant influence on their competence to use playway method.

Hypothesis 3: Teachers teaching experience has no significant influence on their competence to use playway method.

To answer this research question the respondents' score on the measure of teachers' competence to use playway method was subjected to Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with teachers' teaching used as the differentiating variable. The results are presented in Table 6 & 7.

Table 6: Influence of teachers' teaching experience on their competence to use playway method

	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	875.136	6	291.712	3.048	<0.05
Within Groups	13971.858	150	95.698		
Total	14846.993	156			

Table 6 shows the influence of teaching experience on teachers' competence s to use play-way method. It can be seen from the table that the F-value obtained is 3.048 at $p = 0.031$. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that teaching experience has a significant influence on teachers' competence to use playway method.

Table 7: Descriptive analysis of the influence of teaching experience on teachers' competence to use playway method

Table 7: Descriptive analysis of the influence of teaching experience on teachers' competence to use play-way method

Years of teaching experience	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Less than a year	2	65.5000	4.94975	3.5000	62.00	69.00
1-5 years	31	67.6774	3.90203	0.70082	54.00	72.00
6-10 years	35	65.5714	6.87829	1.16264	49.00	74.00
More than 10 years	88	61.8902	12.11163	1.33751	.00	72.00
Total	156	63.9933	9.98220	0.81504	.00	74.00

From the table above it can be seen that the mean score is highest among those who had 1 to 5 years of teaching experience.

Discussion

The finding of research question one indicated that lower primary school Social Studies teachers had fair knowledge of playway method. This tallied with the findings of Nakpodia & Urien (2011) who recommended in their findings, the need for teacher education for continuous updating of their knowledge, skills and interest in their chosen field. Since, students are products of their teachers; a highly skilled teacher will produce brilliant students.

In addition, the study showed that lower primary Ssocial Studies possessed very high level of competence in the use of playway method. These findings also collaborated the view of Omotere (2011) who was of the view that impact of teachers' teaching method played significant roles in the competency and productivity levels of the teachers and eventually make learning more permanently in the learners. In similar vein, Adesina (2012), Copriady (2014) as well as Popoola (2014) equally reiterated the effectiveness of teachers' use of instructional method in the attainment of educational goals at all levels of educational system. This will eventually pave way for teacher competencies in their various aspects of their disciplines. These facts could still be buttressed with the findings of Bryan (2003) who found that teachers who are competence would ensure that students conduct the necessary experiment steps without mistakes which will eventually make the practical class effective. Furthermore a number of factors had been established as influencing teachers' competence in the use of playway method of teaching such as teachers' experience in the use of different teaching methods, teachers' educational background, teachers' motivation and the type of subject to be taught. Experience they say is the best teacher. An experienced teacher could be likened to a competent teacher. The place of experience in the level of teacher competence in playway method of teaching cannot be lowballed. Several researches have been carried out on motivation and competence (Bolles, 1974; Maslow, 1954; McGregor, 1960) and discovered that; play is an important role in stimulating the interest of instructors (teachers). When a reward is attached to their competences, they tend to perform better. Also, Laura and Talwa (2014) posted that a number of factors such as emotional, intelligence, motivation and the rest could assist in teachers' competencies in their various academic disciplines

Finally, on the aspect of the influence of gender on teachers' competence, it was discovered that teacher's gender has no significant influence on their competence. The fact was equally upheld by Kaur and Talwar (2014) that discovered in their findings that teaching competency and emotional intelligence are not influenced by gender.

Conclusion

The study concluded that lower primary schools Social Studies teachers have fair knowledge of playway method of teaching and vast in the use of the method in instructing preschoolers. The teachers equally possessed very high level of competence in the used of the method and that factors such as teachers' experience, teaching method, teachers educational background and teacher motivation are capable of influencing teachers' competences.

Recommendations

Early childhood education is an important aspect of child's literacy education and overall development. Since the effectiveness and appropriateness of playway method of teaching in lower primary schools have been established NPE (NERDC, 2013), teachers should be encouraged to be very vast and knowledgeable in its use through self efforts, seminars, symposia, workshops, in-service training to mention but a few. Recruitment of teachers into lower primary schools by the government and private bodies should be on merit as teachers' qualification and educational background are important factors that can influence the level of competence of teachers in the use of playway method should be done by employers, government and non-governmental bodies.

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