

INNOVATIVE TEACHING PRACTICES AS PREDICTORS OF TEACHERS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined innovative teaching practices as predictors of teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in south-east, Nigeria. The study also builds upon the assumptions of the constructivist learning theory by Lev Vygotsky. The study adopted correlational research design. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study comprised 8921 teachers in 506 public secondary schools in Abia and Anambra States. A sample of 498 teachers was drawn using multi-stage sampling procedure. Two self-developed instruments titled: Innovative Teaching Practice Questionnaire (ITPQ) and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ) was used for data collection. Reliability of the instruments was established using Cronbach Alpha which yielded coefficient value of 0.83 and 0.84 respectively. Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient was used to answer the research questions, while regression analysis was used to ascertain the significant level of prediction among all variables. The study revealed that a positively high prediction exists between innovative teaching practices and teachers' job performance. The findings made important theoretical and practical contributions, by offering highlights on the need for school administrators to organize workshops, aimed at training and re-training teachers on the use of innovative teaching practices needed to cub the mismatch between graduates' skills and labour market demands. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that the government should ensure that innovative teaching practice be made part of the course work in teacher' training programmes.

Keywords: Secondary education, teaching, job performance, reflective practice

Introduction

In Nigeria, secondary education is a crucial stage in the educational ladder, as it prepares students for tertiary education and workforce most of which takes place in a school. A school is an institution of learning. It is designed to provide a conducive environment for teaching students under the teacher's direction. A teacher is one that is professionally trained to impart knowledge, skills and values to the learner. Ezenwegbu (2016) defined teachers as those who mould students' character, personality and show students the right direction to success. A teacher is seen as a person who could be male or female, who helps students acquire knowledge. The teacher does not only teach, but inspire and encourage their students to be the best. A teacher especially needs to be an effective communicator and motivator as it is irrelevant how much knowledge a teacher has if the knowledge cannot be shared to students in an interesting and understandable manner through his teaching approach. Teaching is the process that facilitates learning and requires a balance of many factors in actual performance, knowledge, skill, and qualities of personality. As Shah and Udgaonkar (2018) pointed out that teaching is an instinctual art, mindful of potential, craving of realizations, a pausing, seamless process. Similarly, Adeyemi (2018) opined that teaching is not just about transmitting knowledge, but about creating a situation where students can construct their own knowledge. In the context of this study,

teaching is the intentional act of creating environments and experiences that facilitate learning and promote growth. Teaching and learning takes place at various levels of education: Primary, secondary and tertiary education. However, secondary education is the central focus of this study.

Secondary education is critical in transforming the quality of life of any nation by promoting rapid economic development, equipping students with essential skills, knowledge, and values necessary for success in the workforce, that can drive economic growth and development (Ubanyionwu et al., 2018). In furtherance, a robust secondary education can attract foreign investment, promote economic competitiveness, and enhance Nigeria's position in the global economy (Uchendu et al., 2016). It is undeniable that a sound secondary education, plays crucial role in shaping the future of our youths, who are the leaders of tomorrow. The learning experiences and nurturing that takes place during this period have a lasting impact on students' future learning opportunities and the overall quality of their educational outcomes (Ohamobi et al. 2020). Consequently, the demands on teachers to deliver high-quality education are immense, as they strive to enhance educational standards, foster social and interpersonal skills, diversify curricular, promote equal access to quality education, and equip students with the skills and adaptability needed to thrive in a rapidly changing, globally competitive job market (Osegbue & Ohamobi, 2025; Arop et al., 2019; Den et al., 2017). The education system, particularly secondary schools, is currently facing significant challenges in areas of students' poor performance in both internal and external examinations. This poor performance is characterized by massive failure in Joint Admission and Matriculation Board Examination (JAMB) as well as corresponding WEAC and NECO examinations. This worrisome state has made major stakeholders in the education sector to express concerns about the impact on teaching and learning, and to call for urgent solutions to address the challenges facing secondary schools, particularly in terms of supporting teachers in their teaching pedagogies, in other to improve their job performance. Teachers have been described as the most recognized and indispensable human resources in the education system. They are equally regarded as the single most important elements of the school system. Muheeb (2017) opined that teachers are the initiators and facilitators of teaching and learning activities and they act as agents of change in any school system hence, they can be regarded as the heart of quality improvement strategy. It therefore follows that if teachers are to be productive, due attention must be accorded to their job performance.

Teachers' job performance refers to the effectiveness with which teachers carry out their responsibilities especially in their method of lesson delivery. Jerald (2016) referred to job performance as how an individual carries out responsibilities in competitive manner among the workers in order to achieve excellence. He stressed that teachers job performance includes identifying with the job activity and participating in the job in order to attain self-worth. Similarly, Ayodele and Aladenusi (2014) defined teachers' job performance as how well the teacher performs the statutory roles assigned to him over time. Some of the major responsibilities includes research, teaching, counselling, discipline, and acting as loco-parentis. In the context of this study, the researcher sees teachers' job performance as the ability of the teacher to perform his duties effectively and efficiently in the best possible way to achieve organizational goal particularly in this era of innovation. Some of the most inspiring and unforgettable activities that teachers practice in the classroom, is to use innovative methods to reach out to the minds of students and win their hearts despite their current economic challenges (Ali, 2015; Songkhram, 2013). Innovation connotes a deliberate change geared towards achieving a desired goal.

Innovation as a change may be a new concept, idea or practice (Okunola, 2012). It may also be an improvement, re-introduction of a discarded technique or modification on a practice already in use (Osegbue et al., 2022; Onyali et al. 2019). Whatever form innovation takes, it is usually an exhibition of creativity and ingenuity. Classroom is the best room all over the world where teachers and students are in constant interaction. For teachers to achieve that excellence needed for students' academic success amidst economic crisis, they need to be innovative and creative in their teaching practices. Innovative teaching practices are contemporary issues in today's education system. Etesike (2012) defined innovative teaching practice as a practical teaching method rather than a decorative teaching process. Stressing that it is the type of teaching and learning process that is geared towards the all-round development of students' potentials and abilities to realistically live and appropriately face daily life challenges prevalent in the world today. Innovative teaching enables the teachers to constantly seek knowledge and creative teaching approaches necessary in bringing out the best in their teaching. There are many teaching practices used by effective classroom teachers to achieve teaching excellence. However, innovative classroom teaching practices would be investigated under reflective teaching practice and collaborative teaching practice. These two innovative teaching practices, enhances student engagement and motivation, improve students' outcomes and academic achievement, and promote teacher creativity and professional growth. Reflective and collaborative teaching practices can also foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills, which are essential for students' success in a rapidly changing, globally competitive world.

Reflective practice was introduced by Donald Schon (1983). However, the concept underlining reflective practice are much older. It focuses on the way people think about their experiences and formulate responses as the experiences happen. This is considered as "thinking on your feet". Reflective practice leads to reflective teaching (Anwe, 2012; Simobi & Usulor, 2019). Reflective practice as an inquiry approach that emphasise ethics of constructivist and creative problem-solving (Ogunbemeru & Raymond, 2012; Ottensen, 2017). It is an active and careful consideration one holds in a direct experience that inform future actions. Aminat (2013) asserted that the only transformation tool in enhancing effective teaching is reflective practice which was categorized into two: Reflection-in-action and Reflection-on-action. Reflection-in-action, occur when an action is going on and the reaction is rapid. Reflection-on-action on the other hand, is seen as a procedure for studying immediate at hand events in order to understand them and develop a conceptual framework for useful practices. It involves recalling one's teaching after the lesson. When teachers carry out systematic enquiry into themselves, they understand themselves, their practices and their students better (Deville, 2010; Osegbue, 2021). Contextually, reflective teaching practice is a process where teachers think over their teaching practices, analysing how the lesson was taught and how the lesson might be improved or changed for better learning outcomes. By constantly looking into their own actions and experiences, they professionally grow in their field and teaching practice is greatly enhanced. A key rationale for reflective practice is that, experience alone does not necessarily lead to learning, deliberate reflection on experience is essential.

Reflective teaching practice can play a vital role in promoting teaching and learning by enabling teachers to maximize limited resources, foster a supportive learning environment, and adapt to the unique challenges posed by economic hardship (O'leary & Wood, 2019). Through reflective practice, teachers can critically examine their own teaching methods, identify areas for improvement, and develop innovative strategies to

engage students and promote learning, despite the constraints of a depressed economy. This practice is set out to cover the gap created by traditional teaching methods by enabling the teachers to critically examine their own practices, identify areas for improvement, and make informed decisions to enhance students learning. Through reflective practice, the teacher can bridge the gap between their current teaching approaches and more effective methods, leading to improved student outcomes and increased teachers' confidence. Teachers who adopt reflective teaching practice, can also cultivate a growth mind set, focusing on the development of essential life skills, such as resilience, adaptability, problem-solving, and fostering collaboration in the classroom, which are critical for students' future success in an uncertain economic landscape (Darnell, 2017, Habib, 2017). Contextually, reflective teaching practice is the deliberate process of unpacking the complexities of teaching, examining the intersections of pedagogy, context, and student experience, and using insights gained to refine and redefine instructional approaches, ultimately enhancing the teaching and learning.

Collaborative teaching practice is another innovative classroom teaching practiced by the teacher to achieve effective teaching. Collaborative teaching is defined by Dove and Honigsfeld (2010) as the style of interaction between at least two parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision-making, as they work towards a common goal. Osegbue et al. (2022) observed that collaborative teaching practice is the process of encouraging relationship building, and creating a positive learning environment in the classroom. In the form of co-teaching, teachers share responsibility for the development, implementation and evaluation of classroom instruction designed to meet students' needs (Jeon, 2010; Ali, 2018). In the form of team work, students work together to conduct group projects. Teachers can help foster this practice in the classroom by allowing students to learn, study and work in groups. Collaborative teaching involves a group of instructors working purposely, regularly and cooperatively to help a group of students (Tasdemir & Tildirim, 2017; Aitken, 2018). This is in support of the view of Nwogbo and Okeke (2010) who maintained that students learn best when lessons are handled by more than one teacher and when they are working in groups. Regardless of the subject matter, students working in small groups tend to learn more of what is taught and retain it longer than when the same content is presented in another instructional format (Aitken, 2018; Ohamobi, et al. 2024). This practice of teaching is one of the best ways to lay the foundation of group learning. Collaborative or group work has always been a staple of education. The peer-to-peer nature of this teaching practice, gives students an opportunity to connect with one another. Smith (2011) opined that collaborative teaching practice encourages relationship building, which create a more positive learning environment in the classroom. Instituting collaboration in classroom gives the teacher an innovative teaching strategy with little work to do. The teacher can come up with goals and deadlines which the students will meet. Teachers who adopt the collaborative teaching practices have been seen to achieve high standards of students' academic performance (Obiukwu, 2019).

Collaborative teaching practice can play a significant role in promoting teaching and learning through supportive learning environment. When teachers work together, they can share limited resources, and educational materials, to ensure that all students have access to the tools they need to succeed. Collaborative teaching practices fills the gap between isolated teaching by enabling teachers share knowledge, expertise and resources with colleagues. This approach also helps to bridge the gaps between individual teacher's limitations and the diverse needs of students, leading to more comprehensive and supportive learning environments. Through collaboration, teachers can pool their

collective expertise, develop new strategies, and enhance their teaching practices, ultimately resulting in improved student outcomes and increased teachers' productivity. By working together, teachers can identify and address gaps in their own practices, develop more innovative and effective approaches, and provide more tailored support to their students. Additionally, collaborative teaching allows educators to divide responsibilities, reduce workload and stress, and improve performance. This study examined the extent to which innovative teaching practices predicts teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in a depressed economy. Specifically, the study sought to examine the extent to which innovative teaching practices predict teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. To what extent has reflective teaching practice predicted teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in South-east, Nigeria?
2. To what extent has collaborative teaching practice predicted teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in South-east, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The study was guided further by the following research hypotheses which was tested at .05 level of significance.

- HO₁** Reflective teaching practice would not significantly predict teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in South-east, Nigeria.
- HO₂** Collaborative teaching practice would not significantly predict teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in South-east, Nigeria.

Methods

Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 8,921 teachers in 506 public secondary schools in Abia and Anambra States. The sample of this study comprised 498 teachers drawn from 18 public secondary schools of Abia and Anambra States. A Multi stage cluster sampling technique was used for selection. In stage one, simple random sampling technique was used to select two Local Government Areas each from the three education zones in Abia and six education zones in Anambra States, totalling 18 LGAs. In stage two, one school was selected from each LGA using simple random sampling technique totalling 18 public secondary schools. Proportional stratified random sampling was used to determine the sample of 498 used for the study. Proportional stratified random sampling is deemed appropriate in that, it ensures greater representativeness of the sample relative to the entire population, and also ensures that minority constituents of the population are represented in the sample. Two self-developed instruments titled: Innovative Teaching Practice Questionnaire (ITPQ) containing 6-item questions in two clusters, and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ) containing 9-item questions, were used for data collection. All items were structured on a four-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instruments were validated through informed opinion of three experts. The reliability was established using Cronbach Alpha, which yielded coefficient values of 0.83 and 0.84. The researcher administered the instrument with the help of six properly briefed research assistants. Four hundred and seventy-two questionnaires were duly filled and returned representing 94.8% retrieval rate. The research questions were answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, while Regression Analysis was used to ascertain

the significant level of prediction among reflective and collaborative teaching practices and teachers' job performance. The research questions were interpreted using the real limit of numbers thus: 0.01 to 0.39 (Low prediction), 0.40 to 0.59 (Moderate prediction), and 0.60 to 0.99 (High prediction). In interpreting the values of the null hypothesis, when P-value is less than or equal to 0.05 ($P \leq 0.05$), the null hypothesis will be rejected and the alternative accepted and when P-value is greater than 0.05 Alpha level ($P > 0.05$), the null hypothesis will not be rejected otherwise accepted (Anaekwe, 2016).

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent has reflective teaching practice predicted teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in South-east, Nigeria?

Table 1: Pearson r of Reflective Teaching Practice as Predictors of Teachers' Job Performance

N	Correlation Co-efficient (r)	r ²	Remarks
472	0.725	0.519	High positive prediction

Adjusted r² = 0.635

Result presented in Table 1 showed that reflective teaching practice predicts teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in South-east, Nigeria. The correlation co-efficient (r) of 0.725 indicated that there was a positively high correlation between reflective teaching practice and teachers' job performance in South-east, Nigeria ($r = 0.725$, $N = 472$). The adjusted r² explains that 63.5% of the total variability in teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in South-east, Nigeria can be predicted by reflective teaching practice. In other words, the value of adjusted r² showed that reflective teaching practice significantly predicts teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in South-east, Nigeria (Adjusted r² = 0.635).

Research Question 2: To what extent has collaborative teaching practice predicted teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in South-east, Nigeria?

Table 2: Pearson r of Collaborative Teaching Practice as Predictors of Teachers' Job Performance

N	Correlation Co-efficient (r)	r ²	Remarks
472	0.707	0.490	High positive prediction

Adjusted r² = 0.519

Result presented in Table 2 showed that collaborative teaching practice predicts teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in South-east, Nigeria. The correlation co-efficient (r) of 0.707 indicated that there was a positively high correlation between collaborative teaching practice and teachers' job performance in South-east, Nigeria ($r = 0.707$, $N = 472$). The adjusted r² explains that 51.9% of the total variability in teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in South-east, Nigeria can be predicted by collaborative teaching. This means that the value of adjusted r² showed that collaborative teaching practice significantly predicts teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in South-east, Nigeria (Adjusted r² = 0.519).

Hypothesis 1

Reflective teaching practice would not significantly predict teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in South-east, Nigeria.

Table 3: Test of Significance on Reflective Teaching Practice as Predictor of Teachers' Job Performance

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	p-value/Sig.F Change
1	.725	.519	.535	.66248	.101	2.105	1	469	.016

a. Predictors: (Constant), Reflective teaching practice

b. Dependent Variable: Teachers' job performance

Data presented in Table 3 revealed that the p-value of 0.016 is less than alpha level of .05, this means that the null hypotheses was rejected ($F(1,469) = 2.105, p < 0.05$). Thus, reflective teaching practice significantly predict teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in South-east, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2

Collaborative teaching practice would not significantly predict teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in South-east, Nigeria.

Table 4: Test of Significance on Collaborative Teaching Practice as Predictor of Teachers' Job Performance

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	p-value/Sig.F Change
1	.707	.490	.519	.67892	.022	1.501	1	469	.029

a. Predictors: (Constant), Collaborative teaching practice

b. Dependent Variable: Teachers' job performance

Data presented in Table 4 revealed that the p-value of 0.029 is less than alpha level of .05, this implies that the null hypotheses was rejected. Thus, collaborative teaching practice significantly predicts teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Abia and Anambra States ($F(1,469) = 1.501, p < 0.05$).

Discussion

Findings of the study were discussed based on the research questions and null hypotheses that guided the study. The present findings extend the findings of research on innovative teaching practices as variables that can predict teachers' job performance in schools. The findings of this study indicated that a positively high prediction exists between innovative teaching practices and teachers' job performance. The finding in research question one and hypothesis one indicated a strong positive prediction between reflective teaching practice and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in South-east, Nigeria. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Sturkie (2017) that there was positive relationship between reflective teaching practice awareness and performance level of teachers' candidates. This finding was also in-line-with the finding of Yanuarti and Treagust (2015) that reflective teaching practice does actually improve teachers' job performance in the classroom. The hypothesis also revealed that reflective teaching practice predicts teachers' job performance. In furtherance, the findings agreed with Zahid and Khanam (2019) who maintained that reflective teaching practice helps teachers to plan, implement and improve their performance by rethinking about their strengths and weaknesses, thereby predicting their performance.

The finding in research question two and hypothesis two indicated a strong positive prediction between collaborative teaching practice and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in South-east, Nigeria. This finding is in support of the contention of Chikezie and Ifeakor (2018) who observed that there was a significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students exposed to collaborative learning strategy and those exposed to conventional teaching strategy. Similarly, Osegbue et al. (2022) maintained that collaborative teaching provides teacher with a partner to help them in the process of setting objectives, making plans, delivering lessons, and evaluating the learning outcomes. This implied that collaborative teaching and learning practice encourages effective teachers' job performance and students learning. The hypothesis indicated that collaborative teaching practice significantly predicts teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in South-east, Nigeria. This finding agreed with Umezulike and Ndinechi (2014) that team work is an effective strategy used by teachers for teaching business education lessons in secondary school. Similarly, Narayan (2016) observed that collaborative practices among teachers can lead to improve teachers' morale, increase sense of efficacy, and enhance job performance. She emphasized the importance of collegiality in promoting teacher's professionalism and student learning.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that there is a high positive relationship between school organizational climate and teachers' job performance; school facilities and teachers' job performance and a moderately high positive relationship between instructional space and teachers' job performance. The study also concluded that reflective teaching practice has high positive prediction of teachers' job performance. Finally, the study concluded that there is a high positive relationship between collaborative teaching practice and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Abia and Anambra States.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendation were made:

1. The Government and curriculum planners should ensure that reflective teaching practice is made part of the course work in teachers' training programmes.
2. School administrators should organize workshops aimed at training and re-training teachers on the use of innovative teaching practices such as collaborative teaching practice.

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