VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS ON SELECTED TEACHING METHODS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: A CASE STUDY OF SOUTH-SOUTH GEOPOLITICAL ZONE NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examines vocational and technical education students’ perceptions on selected teaching methods in tertiary institutions: a case study of a south-south Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria. A questionnaire was developed by the researcher and used in data collection for the study. Mean, Standard Deviation and the Z-test statistic was used in data analysis. The major findings were highlighted in the study where it was revealed that individualized method of teaching was preferred to the field trips method in the teaching and leaving technical education subjects because the courses are practically oriented that require the acquisition of knowledge and skills to enable the individual carry out such skills through individualized training. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that lecturers should combing both field trip and individualized instruction as situation demands for improving teaching and learning of vocational and technical education courses.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching method refers to the ways and means which a teacher adopts to guide the students through teaching and learning activities in order to accomplish the desired goal. (Akinsende, 1998). There are many teaching methods and techniques available to the teacher. These methods and techniques are designed for communicating with students. Effective teaching and learning takes place when the teacher knows which method or technique to use in a particular situation to meet specific goals.

The choice of a method of teaching has multiplied greatly in recent time. The need for vocational and technical education teachers to be motivational in their teaching method cannot be overemphasized; hence the teacher is aware that students come on teaching and learning situation with different traits (Umunadi, 2008). In developing teaching methods and techniques, teachers are faced with the task of placing the students in an educational setting tailored to the students learning. The setting in which services are rendered has a strong influence on the students and teachers (Igbo, 2007).

Some researchers observed that most teachers apply the conventional method of teaching. In this method of teaching mentioned above, most of the students struggle to identify and actually understand the instructional method and technique in different perceptions. In order to address the concept and misconceptions in definition of appropriate teaching methods used by the teachers that can lead to better understanding of the topic and performance of students in the tertiary institution, the researcher has selected two frequently used teaching methods used by vocational and technical education teaches in tertiary institutions. The selected teaching methods are individualized instruction and field trips.
Individualized Instruction

Individualized instruction is a technique that permits a student to work towards achieving objectives that are appropriate for him and be allowed to work at a pace that is challenging but does not push him faster than he is able to achieve (Dave, 1970).

Field Trips

Field trip is a group visit to locations for the purpose of observing on-the-spot situations under special guidance. The field trip provides a link between classroom and actual life situation. It permits learners to experience that which could never occur in classroom or laboratory.

Statement of the Problem

The conventional method of teaching commonly used by the teachers in tertiary institutions appears ineffective for the teaching of vocational and technical subjects, hence, it is desirable to examine two major methods of teaching that can improve teaching and learning of vocational and technical education courses. The two methods are the individualized instruction and the field-trips methods.

Purpose of the Study

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Identify the teaching methods appropriate for teaching vocational and technical education students.
2. Determine teaching methods that can enhance vocational and technical education students skills acquisition.
3. Ascertain students’ perceptions of these methods, which can enhance vocational and technical education students’ performance.

Research Question

1. What are students’ perceptions on the teaching method that can enhance the students’ performance?
Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of students’ perceptions on teacher use of individualized instruction and field-trip methods.

Methods and Materials

The research design is descriptive survey. The population was made up of the 60 students of the third and fourth year of Technical Education students of the Department of Technical and Business Education, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria. There was no sampling because the population of students was not large, so all the students were used for the study. The instrument used was a two-10-item questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed using a four-point Likert-type rating scale namely Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD), with a corresponding weights of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The questionnaire was designed to elicit information from the respondents. Their opinions on the two methods of teaching were sought. Three experts validated the instrument all of them from Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria. A grand mean value of 3.00 and above qualifies the teaching method while a grand mean value below 3.00 disqualifies the teaching method. The Z-test statistic was used to test the significant difference between the mean responses of students’ perception on teacher use of individualized instruction method and field trip method.

Results

Research Question

What are students’ perceptions on the teaching method that can enhance the students’ performance? Data analyzed for the research questions are presented in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Responses on Students’ perceptions on individualized method of teaching in tertiary institution N=60.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Teacher likes individualized instruction technique because it permits a student to work towards achieving objectives that are appropriate to him</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>6.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Personalizing educational programmes is a recognition of individual abilities and goals so as to enable them achieve the best of their abilities</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>6.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Students are always active, involved and responsible for their instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teaching and learning is shifted to the learner as the central actor

Varied alternative and optional learning experiences are available to meet the stated objectives

The strategies or methods of instruction are designed to reach students as individuals

Teacher uses a variety of media and instructional resources

The learning environment is designed for flexibility and variety

Frequent testing is done so that correct responses are recognized and rewarded

Students are evaluated in terms of individual performance and not by comparison with others

The results obtained from Table 1 indicated a grand mean (3.55) with SD of 6.26 which qualifies the individualized instruction method of teaching to be effective in technical education courses in tertiary institutions.

Table 2: Responses on Students’ Perceptions on Field-Trips Method in Tertiary Institutions N=60.
5. Field-trips will make students pass their exams 8 8 20 24 2.0 5.72
6. Field-trips helps students to develop insight into the operations in industries set-up 10 3 29 18 2.0 5.98
7. Field-trips make learners have opportunity to observe, touch, hear and work with employees of the company 6 10 30 14 2.1 5.69
8. With the experience gained from field-trips, students will be able to buy their own tools and equipment 10 4 21 25 1.9 5.90
9. Company will employ students after field-trips 18 13 20 9 2.6 5.01
10. Field – trips will ensure that teacher sets up the objectives before it takes place 8 18 25 9 2.4 5.09

Grand Mean 2.26 5.40

The results obtained from Table 2 indicated a grand mean (2.26) with SD of (5.40) which disqualified the field-trips method of teaching technical education courses in tertiary institutions.

**Hypothesis**

H$_{0i}$: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of students’ perceptions on teacher use of individualized instruction method and field-trips method.

**Table 3:** Z-test summary on students perceptions on teacher use of individualized institution method and field-trips method.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching method</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Z-cal</th>
<th>Z-crit</th>
<th>Level of sign</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individualized inst method</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>6.26</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>1.199</td>
<td>1.960</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field-trips method</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>1.199</td>
<td>1.960</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results obtained from Table 3 showed that there is no significant difference in the perception of students. In the table 3 Z-calculated of 1.199 was obtained against the table value of Z-critical of 1.960 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the Z-cal is greater than the Z-critical, the null hypothesis is rejected as remarked in Table 3, thus indicated that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of students’ perception on teacher use of individualized instruction and field-trips methods.
Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that the field-trips method was not appropriate for teaching technical education courses in tertiary instructions. Their responses indicated that they did not learn the practical aspect of the courses effectively when the field-trips method was used by the teachers. Skills acquisition is the bedrock of technical education. Olaitan (1983) observed that for learning process to be effective, knowledge of the subject matter as well as skills development in teaching practical courses are essential. The students’ responses showed that teaching is not effective hence they do not gain practical experience when field-trips method is adopted. They observed that field-trips is a mere sightseeing exercise.

On the other hand students tend to look at individualized method as one of the most effective method of teaching technical education courses. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of student’s perceptions on teacher use of individualized and field-trips methods. This indicated that they would learn better using both methods of teaching technical education courses.

Conclusion

Educators have advocated for the use of all the methods of teaching or a combination of both the individualized and field trips methods to improve quality of teaching technical courses so that slow learners can be helped to improve upon their learning process (Njoka, 1989).

Recommendations

1. Lecturers should be given in-service training on how to improve the methods of teaching to enhance the teaching and learning process.
2. Government should provide tools and equipment in the tertiary institutions to enable the teachers use both methods of teaching maximally to promote the teaching and learning process.
3. Teachers should combine both individualized instruction and field trips methods as the situation demands to make teaching and learning effective.

References


