

An Examination of The Distribution of Teachers' Trust in Pupils and Parents in Nursery and Lower Primary Sections of Schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area of Oyo State.

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Abstract

This study investigated teachers' trust in pupils and parents in the nursery and lower sections of ten primary schools in Ibadan south west local government area of Oyo state (0-8years). Specifically, the study sought to know the level of trust teachers have in parents and pupils in their schools. It also attempted to find out the influence of teacher gender and class taught on the level of trust exhibited by the teachers to parents and pupils. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. Questionnaires whose reliability coefficient (using the Cronbach Alpha scale) was 0.73 were used to collect the data for the study. Two hundred teachers were randomly selected for the study. Results revealed that the level of trust teachers have in pupils and their parents is fairly high and that teacher gender and class do not influence the level of trust they have in parents and pupils in their respective schools. However, majority of teachers fear that pupils may cheat if they have the opportunity, which is an indication that teachers may not always trust pupils to do honest work. This is a reflection of the level of examination malpractices in the nation which teachers and parents really need to look into at this foundational level of education. Also, the study revealed that many parents do not attend Parent Teacher Association meetings. Attendance at Parent Teacher meetings is a very strong determinant of parental involvement in their children's education and this also should be looked into by schools as it may be a tool for curbing dishonest traits in children early enough before they become serious examination malpractices and other delinquent behaviours.

Keywords: teachers, trust, parents, pupils, distribution

Introduction

The Nigerian educational system is plagued with the problem of teacher quality and its effect on learners' achievement. Teachers in turn blame the government and the parents for not providing good teaching and learning environment, conditions of service, adequate remuneration and positive support for the children. It has always been a case of one sector shifting the blame on the other. The standard of education has continued to go down and there does not seem to be any light at the end of the tunnel. There seems to be a rivalry between the home and the school whereas an adage says it takes a whole community to educate a child. A situation where teachers and parents see themselves as enemies and not partners in the education of children may not allow the children to have any confidence in the teachers who teach them. Lack of confidence in teachers has been found to affect academic achievement of children as well as their social development (Kurniansih, Yuniarti & Kim, 2012)

Moreover, studies have continued to reveal that family-teacher relationship is very vital to child's optimal care (Klein & Miller, 2012). Adults learn more about children while children build a strong support system and grow up to be emotionally healthy. Strong home-school relationships also help to connect families and schools. This aids the achievement of educational goals of bringing up children who develop into self reliant and productive adults.

Trust has been defined as the concept that includes the perception of the other person as competent, reliable, caring and honest (Lewicki & Tomlinson 2003; Kennet, 1999; Tschannen Moran & Hoy, 1998), while trust in the classroom has also been defined as consisting of individual respect, mutual understanding and expectations around behaviour (Bryk & Schneider, 2003).

Trust is vital in any relationship, particularly relationships that help children to learn. It is also very important that parents are integrated into any learning process that involves their children as this will reduce the one sidedness that often characterize the Nigerian system of education (most communication between teachers and parents in Nigerian schools are discipline related and negative). When there is unequal relationship, mutual trust is often lacking.

However, a change in this system will engage children, parents and teachers in open dialogue on an equal footing. There should be acceptance among everyone involved in the education of the child. To build trust, there should be mutual understanding and reciprocity as well as the protection of the interests of all those involved. Parents are expected to partner with the school in educating children. The extent to which parents are involved in their children's schoolwork has been found to depend on a number of factors which include socio-economic status and education. Children from low socio-economic background who may not enjoy adequate parental involvement may take solace in a relationship with their teachers if such teachers have the required social relationship with the children. Such relationships depend on the level of trust the teachers and pupils have for one another. Trusting relationship between teachers and children engender academic success through a positive social network. In a consortium on Chicago school research (University of Chicago study) researchers report that "students performance is better where students report high levels of trust for their teachers and where they report that teachers provide personal support to them"(cited in NEA foundation 2012).

However, while many literature have focused on student trust for teachers or parents trust in teachers, the level of trust teachers have in children has been ignored . This indicates a one sided approach of looking at the problem of education and children's achievement not only in Nigeria but even around the globe. While there exists quite a number of studies on parents' trust for teachers and learners' trust for teachers there is a paucity of studies on teachers trust for either parents or children and this has informed this study which sought to examine the level of trust which teachers in Nigeria have in the children they teach and the parents of these children. Teacher-pupil trust is reciprocal and beneficial for both teacher and pupil particularly in early childhood classrooms. Teachers who trust children and have confidence in their ability to be honest when they work find it easy to allow children to explore and investigate while teachers who do not trust children tend to wield a lot of control on the children. When children learn under an atmosphere where there is tension as a result of the level of control being exercised by the teacher, they are not likely to enjoy school. At the same time when children trust their teachers they express themselves freely and believe that he or she will always be fair in his or her dealings with them. They enjoy their work and play and are more attentive and successful in their work both in and out of school.

In Nigeria today teachers need to trust children to do what is right and behave well so that teaching and learning will be well done. Children really have to make sure that their teachers trust them so that whatever the condition they work in, they will still enjoy their work. inadequate materials sometimes have to be shared, homework have to be completed and submitted for checking, class work will be done and submitted for checking. For a child to enjoy time in school, the teacher must be assured that the child does his or her work by himself or herself without soliciting the assistance of the other children to do it for him or her.

For a school to run smoothly at a time when examination malpractices are on the increase, teachers have to trust that children do honest work and that parents encourage children in honesty. At the early childhood level, a teacher has to put in place some measures to train children in honesty and trustworthiness. This he has to do in collaboration with parents which implies that parents too must be trustworthy and honest, they should not do homework for their children or come to school to defend children when they misbehave.

Furthermore, the early childhood teacher who uses a constructivist principle in his or her classroom needs to trust her children in order to take risks using group activities, shared ownership, real conversation, and control of academic pursuits (Rainer Guiton & Bowen, 2000) children in a constructivist classroom need to be trusted to be able to construct their own knowledge by interacting with their environment and people around. When teachers trust children, they allow them to interact with materials and their peers in the classroom thereby creating a classroom community that is a microcosm of the larger society. An egalitarian society where each child is respected and allowed to be responsible for his actions. The teacher engages children in meaningful activities and guides the children to achieve their goals, corrections are done with respect and positively too (Ennis & Mcauley, 2002). Children are made to feel important and proud of their achievements regardless of their level. Trust in children is very crucial to a teacher's achievement of his or her set goals.

The focus of this study is to examine the level of trust teachers in some Nigerian Nursery and Primary schools have in pupils and parents.

Research questions:

The study attempted to find answers to the following questions:

- i. How do teachers' trust in parents and pupils relate to their gender?
- ii. What is the relationship between teachers' trust in pupils and parents based on pupils' class?

- iii. What is the level of trust in the teacher-pupil relationship?
- iv. What is the level of trust in the teacher-parent relationship?

Scope of the study.

The study examined the level of teacher's trust in pupils and parents in ten (10) selected nursery and primary schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area of Oyo state of Nigeria. Five public schools and five private schools were used for the study.

Methodology:

A survey research design was adopted in the study. The selected sample for the study is made up of two hundred nursery and lower primary school teachers in ten different schools (5 private and 5 public) in Ibadan south west local Government area of Oyo state. The private schools were randomly selected from all the nursery and primary schools in Ibadan South West Local Area of Oyo state while the public schools were purposively selected from public schools that have nursery classes attached to them in Ibadan South West Local Government. The teachers also were randomly selected from all the teachers in the nursery to primary three classes of the selected nursery and primary schools.

Questionnaires were used for data collection. The teacher questionnaires for teachers were designed to contain questions that would elicit responses that would be used to determine the level of trust of the respondents in pupils and their parents, thereby testing the formulated research questions. Each of the questionnaires consisted of sections A and B. Section A sought information on the personal data of each respondent such as name of school, teacher's name, class taught and sex. In section B, the structured items contained items that were to be responded to using a four point Likert scale namely: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), strongly disagree (SD). The questionnaires measure the level of trust that teachers had in pupils and their parents.

VALIDATION AND RELIABILITY OF INSTRUMENT

Content and face validity of the instrument were done by colleagues in the area of early childhood education and counselling psychology. Some items were re worded while some were removed based on colleagues' advice. The questions were later administered to some children in a nursery and primary school in Egbeda Local Government area of Oyo state. The data was analysed and the reliability coefficient using Cronbach alpha scale was found to be 0.73.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT.

The questionnaires were administered to 200 teachers in 10 nursery and primary schools. The instruments were administered by the researchers.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Each questionnaire was marked and scored separately. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentage, frequency, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics of t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA). This enabled us to model trust as a feature of school organization that varied among male and female teachers and among the various classes.

Upon analysis of the data, the following results were obtained

Table 2.0 shows the mean score of teachers' trust in children and parents based on gender. The male teachers have the greater mean score of 54.45 while the female teachers mean score is 52.15. However, the result of the t-test shows that the difference in the mean scores is not significant. This implies that the teachers' gender does not determine the level of trust they have in parents and children in their classes.

Table 3.0 shows that in the mean score of teacher's trust based on class, Nursery 3 has the highest mean score of 58.6667 while the result of the ANOVA shows the difference in mean is significant.

Discussion

The results of this study would be discussed based on the research questions formulated

Research question1: How does teachers' trust in parents and pupils relate to their gender?

The result on table 3 indicated that the difference in teachers' trust based on gender is not significant this implies that the sex of the teacher does not influence the level of trust in pupils and parents. Whether male or female, teachers stand in place of parents they should all provide the needed care and love for the children they teach.

Research question 2: what is the relationship between teachers' trust in pupils and parents based on their class?

The result in table 4.0 shows that the teacher trust based on class mean score is not significantly different. This implies that the class being taught by the teacher does not determine the level of trust that the teacher has in the

parents and their children. This is quite impressive as it shows that the teachers respect the children irrespective of their class. It also shows that the teachers do not exercise too much control over the children. He is impartial and the relationship between him and the pupils is cordial.

Research question 3: What is the level of trust in the teacher-pupil relationship?

Items 1,3,8,9,11,14,16 and 20 answer this research question. Majority of the teachers (94%) believe that children are reliable, can be counted to do their work (91%), can be trusted (86.4%). 72% of teachers believe what the pupils say, while 66.7% believe that the pupils are competent learners. 80.3% say that the pupils do their class work as expected while 92.4% said that the children show determination to learn. All these responses indicate that teachers have a high level of trust in their children. This shows that a cordial relationship exists between the teachers and the children they teach. This relationship is expected to foster academic success and social development in the children. However, the responses to items 11 (pupils in this school have to be closely monitored) 79.2%, (13) (pupils in this school cheat if they have the chance) 50.7% and 14 (pupils in this school are secretive) 57.7% may reflect that there are issues concerning honesty especially as it relates to pupils doing honest work without being monitored as well as having confidence to discuss freely with their teachers.

A nation that aims at technological advancement and self reliance requires teachers who promote learning by allowing children to learn through exploration using hands-on activities in constructivist classrooms. This will enable children to develop independence and ability to work without being under rigorous supervision and teacher's control. When teachers exercise too much control, children tend to learn under tension and hide many things away from their teachers. Teachers may also need to learn to facilitate learning using child-initiated activities as against the traditional teacher-centred activities that characterize the typical Nigerian classrooms.

Research question 4: What is the level of trust in the teacher- parent relationship?

This question will be answered using the responses to items 4,5,6,7,10,17,19.

Item 4: teachers say that they can count on parents (70%). item 5: teachers believe that most of the parents do a good job (51.4%). Item 6: Teachers trust parents to support them (62.3%). Item 7: Parents are reliable in their commitment to their children's school work (49%). Item 10: Teachers can believe what parents tell them (81.3%). Item 19: Parents in this school come to check on their children's work (53.4%).

The responses show that there exists a cordial relationship between teachers and parents. Parents promote the home-school linkage by making sure that they are involved in their children's school work and support the teachers in event of need. However, item 17 (parents in this school attend PTA meetings regularly (54%) may not be adequate to show that parents are interested in their children's welfare. Home-school partnership can be promoted through a number of programmes but PTA meetings is one activity that has been found to effectively bring parents and teachers together to discuss issues that pertain to the holistic development of the children while also allowing parents to participate in the administration of the school and have their own input in decision making. A child whose parents attend PTA meeting regularly is also happy that his parent is interested in his welfare (Epstein cited in Ogunsanwo, 2003).

Conclusion and recommendation

The results of this study has revealed that the trend in nursery and lower primary levels of education in Nigeria is moving away from the traditional system whereby teachers and parents are viewing themselves as rivals, (at least from the teachers' perspective). Teachers have started to build trust in parents and the children they teach. Parents are now being seen as partners in the education of the parents of the child

Teachers' level of trust in the children unfortunately seems to be a reflection of the level of dishonesty in the nation. Teachers do not seem to trust children to do a good job unsupervised and they also believed that children may cheat if they have the opportunity to do so. This seems to be a serious issue that parents and teachers should jointly look into. Teachers need to implement developmentally appropriate practices in their classroom management and teaching methods.

Nigerian teachers also need to allow children to learn in a less restrictive environment using methods that allow for less teacher control. These approaches may enhance independence, a more cordial teacher-pupil relationship, and a reduction in cheating which is usually done in order to obtain high test scores at all cost.

This study replicates in the Nigerian setting, the research work carried out by Roger D.G Megan Tschanier-Moran and Wayne K.H In Chicago, United States of America in 2004. Some modifications were however made in this study to make it culturally appropriate to the Nigerian setting. Many of the items in the questionnaire were

restructured to reflect the Nigerian school system.

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Tables:

Table 1.0: Descriptive analysis of teachers' trust according to variable

No	Variable	Frequency				Mean	SD	N
		SA	A	D	SD			
1	Pupils in this school are reliable	43 (23.5)	129 (70.5)	8 (4.4)	2 (1.1)	3.333	2.171	183
2	Pupils are caring towards one another	36 (19.7)	135 (73.3)	7 (3.8)	3 (1.6)	3.0929	0.1126	183
3	Pupils in this school can be counted on to do their work	37 (20.2)	131 (71.6)	12 (6.6)	2 (1.1)	3.0984	0.5941	183
4	Teachers can count on the parents in this school	23 (12.6)	105 (57.4)	41 (22.4)	12 (6.6)	2.737	0.8032	183
5	Teachers think most of the parents do a good job with their children.	15 8.2	79 (43.2)	16 8.7	16 8.7	2.464	0.8501	183
6	Teachers in this school trust parents to support them.	25 (13.7)	89 (48.6)	54 (29.5)	13 (7.1)	2.847	2.385	183
7	Parents in this school are reliable in their commitment to their children's work.	30 (16.4)	78 (42.6)	62 (33.9)	12 (6.6)	2.692	0.823	183
8	Teachers in this school trust their students.	23 (12.6)	135 (73.8)	23 (12.6)	1 (0.50)	2.972	0.5687	183
9	Teachers in this school believe what students say.	10 (5.5)	123 (67.2)	39 (21.3)	8 (4.4)	2.704	0.7112	183
10	Teachers can believe what parents tell them.	19 (10.8)	129 (76.5)	28 (15.3)	7 (3.8)	2.874	0.6294	183
11	The pupils in this school have to be closely supervised.	53 (29.0)	92 (50.2)	31 (16.9)	4 (2.2)	3.027	0.824	183
12	Teachers here believe that children are competent learners.	29 (15.3)	94 (51.4)	58 (31.7)	2 (1.1)	2.9197	0.6995	183
13	Pupils in this school cheat if they have the chance.	12 (6.6)	77 (44.1)	58 (31.7)	35 (19.1)	2.3497	.884	183
14	Pupils here are secretive.	15 (8.2)	87 (47.5)	53 (29)	22 (12)	2.4536	0.9239	183
15	The pupils in this school talk freely about their lives outside of school	15 (8.2)	75 (41)	70 (33.3)	20 (10.7)	2.6120	2.4082	183
16	Pupils in this school do their class work as expected	41 (22.4)	106 (57.9)	34 (18.6)	2 (1.1)	3.0164	0.6751	183
17	Parents in this school attend PTA meetings regularly	25 (13.7)	75 (41.0)	62 (33.9)	19	2.5374	0.8930	
18	Most of the time children in this school engage in fighting	3 (1.6)	20 (10.9)	100 (34.6)	60 (32.7)	1.8142	0.684	
19	Most parents in this school come to check on their children's work	28 (5.3)	88 (48.1)	53 (29.0)	14 (7.7)	2.7104	0.8176	
20	Pupils in this school show determination to learn	40 (21.9)	129 (70.5)	13 (9.1)	1 (0.5)	3.1366	0.5426	

Table 2.0: T-test of teachers' trust according to gender

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	Df	Sig(2-tailed)	Mean difference
Male	82	54.45	6.709	1.890	170	0.060	2.2957
Female	90	52.15	8.937	1.915	164.144	0.057	2.2957

Table 3.0: descriptive statistics of teachers' trust based on class taught.

Class	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Not indicated	53.6250	13	8.3484
Nursery 1	53.7500	26	6.3407
Nursery 2	54.333	17	6.5774
Nursery 3	58.6667	17	10.9697
Primary 1	52.4118	31	7.0094
Primary 2	52.8696	37	6.1887
Primary 3	53.0000	42	7.9662
Total	53.2011	183	7.9985

Table 4.0: Anova of teacher's trust according to class

	Sum of squares	d.f	Mean square	F	Sig
Between groups	913.911	9	101.546	1.463	0.166
Within groups	11379.796	164	69.389		
Total	12293.707	173			

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