



Influence of gender and years of teaching experience on the use of specific feedback mechanism in primary schools in Edo state

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Abstract

The study investigated the influence of gender and years of teaching experience on the use of specific feedback mechanism among Primary Schools teachers in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State using the ex-post facto research design. A sample of 450 public primary school teachers was drawn via multi-stage sampling techniques involving simple random sampling, non-proportionate stratified random sampling and accidental sampling techniques were used. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided this study. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire titled Teachers' Use of Specific Feedback Mechanism Scale (TUSFMS). The reliability coefficient of the instruments was 0.92. Research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using independent t-test and one-way ANOVA where applicable. Result revealed that there is a significant difference in the use of specific feedback based on teachers' gender, though their usage is at a low extent. Further result revealed that teachers across the different years of teaching experience do not differ significantly in the use of specific feedback, though usage of specific was low among the sampled teachers. Based on the findings it was recommended among others that school administrators organize workshops and seminars for teachers on the importance of specific feedback and how it can be provided to students for optimal learning.

Keywords: specific feedback mechanism, gender and teaching experience, academic achievement

Introduction

Feedback is an important element in the teaching and learning process as it helps both the teachers and the students to identify their areas of strengths and weaknesses. During the process of teaching and learning, students are evaluated by the teacher either during the course of the lesson or at the end of the lesson. The teacher is able to ascertain if the stated instructional objectives have been achieved through the responses made by the students and this provides more information to the teacher if his/her teaching methods are effective or not. Feedback is the formative and constructive information that is given to a learner regarding his/her academic performance. To this end, Orluwene and Ekim (2015) [8] defined feedback as information given to students on their correct or wrong response. That is to say feedback is any information that is geared towards improving students' learning outcome. In the same vein, Abraham (2002) viewed feedback as information provided to a learner by an instructor to inform them of their academic performance and areas of improvement. That is to say, feedback is informing a learner know how he/she has performed in a given academic task and not the reinforcement, appraisal, recommendation, award of excellence or criticism given to the learner for doing something right or wrong as the view been held by some persons. This implies that feedback plays an important role as it helps to develop the abilities of a learner and their academic performance enhanced. Therefore, feedback is that information given to a learner by the teacher that helps put the learner in the path of academic success.

The main focus of the researchers is on specific feedback mechanism because the place of specific feedback cannot be overruled in the school system as it is the hallmark of all

educational activities. There is no teacher that will not evaluate the learner after giving an instruction. This is because during the course of an evaluation, learners are expected to respond to some questions based on what they have been taught. These questions and the responses from the learners are used by the teacher to re-strategise the lesson and teaching methods if needed and to determine the areas the learner need remediation. Specific feedback also plays an important role in the teaching-learning process as it exposes learners to areas they are doing and not doing well and how they can improve academically.

Specific feedback is a type of feedback that exposes students to detailed information concerning their performances in particular class activity and procedures or steps to achieve high academic scores. Orluwene and Ekim (2015) [8] stated that specific feedback is the information given to a learner on the correct or incorrect and what the learner need to do to achieve his/her goals by pointing out the learners' strengths and weaknesses through the information obtained from what the learner had done correctly or incorrectly, why his response was correct or wrong and how to enhance his academic performance. That is to say, specific feedback provides guidance to students in their learning and gives them direction on how to achieve their academic goals.

Shari (2013) [11] stated that specific feedback are comments that tell a person or a learner about his /her performance in a particular task, it also explains why his/her performance was so and how to achieve good performance. This means specific feedback is not only related to students but it is also applicable to other categories of persons who may not necessarily be students. Also, Megan (2015) stated, specific feedback points out what we like or do not like, why we liked

it or why we do not like. This simply means specific feedback points out things that are favorable or unfavorable to us. Also, it is that information that points out our strength and weakness and how to improve on the weakness. Therefore, specific feedback is the information that an instructor gives to a learner concerning the correct or incorrect response the learner has made, reasons for the options and guidelines on how the learner can achieve academic excellence. In other words, the information must be immediately relevant to the task performed by the learner.

There are two dimensions of specific feedback: specific positive feedback and specific negative feedback. Hence, Lia, Pauliene, Meijer, Fred, Korthagan and Robert, (2011) ^[4] opined that specific feedback can either be positive or negative. Orluwene and Ekim (2015) ^[8] viewed specific positive feedback as information about an individual's performance with emphasis on tasks done correctly. That is to say, specific positive feedback focuses only on correct responses made by learners and how such individuals can achieve greater height. To this end, specific positive feedback is that information provided by a teacher to a learner concerning the correctness of his response, pointing out why he obtained such a grade or score. On the other hand, specific negative feedback is that information provided to a student concerning his/her poor performance, pointing out why he/she obtained a low grade and explaining the procedures to improve on his performance. Therefore, Rubak, Ipsen, Sorensen, and Charles (2008) ^[10] viewed specific negative feedback as information given to a learner about his/her performance in a specific task that was done incorrectly and what is expected of that learner in order to improve his/her performance. That is to say, specific negative feedback is the information given to a learner concerning his/her wrong response and steps to achieve high scores. Therefore specific negative feedback is that information given to a learner which focuses only on the task not well done and how such a learner can improve on his weaknesses.

Based on observations and personal experience of the researchers in the classroom, it shows that many students/pupils fail the same set of questions which had been given to them previously during classwork and assignment in their examinations. This is an indication that teachers do not provide adequate specific feedback to their students/pupils during class activities. If this continues it might mire the educational system and the rate of examination malpractice might rise beyond what it is now. Based on these observations, the researcher suspected some factors could be responsible for the inadequate provision of specific feedback to students by their teachers. Two of such factors were considered in this study which are teachers' gender and years of teaching experience.

Gender is a Latin word derived from the word 'Genus' which means kind or race. It is a psychophysiological process that identifies a person as a male or female in terms of their role or function in the society (Shuvo, 2015). That is, gender is the biological properties that define a person as a male or female. In the teaching profession, there exist various categories of persons including gender differences. That is to say, there are male and female teachers in the educational sector. The society believes that the teaching profession is most suitable for women and coincidentally, there are more female teachers than the male teachers in most primary schools within the area of this study. In all the public primary schools in Egor LGA, there are more female than male teachers. The fact that

the number of female teachers outweighs the male teachers, raises some questions regarding feedback and academic performance. Are female teachers rendering effective teaching by a way of providing specific feedback to their students? Are male teachers in primary schools using their masculine abilities to create a positive impact on the academic performance of students or they are in the teaching profession because they could not find better job opportunities? Also, the Bible has labeled the female teachers as a weaker vessel (Shari, 2000) ^[12]. Is this weakness reflecting positively or negatively in the way they teach and give specific feedback to their students?

In a study carried out by Amita and Vyhyanta (2008) ^[1], it was revealed that male and female teachers differ in terms of classroom management and practice. Their study shows that students who were taught by female teachers are better in language learning than those taught by male teachers. This high performance could be as a result of the nature of feedback these students might have received from the male and female teachers respectively. In a similar study carried out by Orluwene and Oddiri (2016) ^[8] on the frequency of feedback types used by male and female teachers in Emuohua, Ikwere L.G.A. of River State, it was revealed that both male and female chemistry teachers use specific positive feedback and specific negative feedback at a low rate.

In another study carried out by Nabwire, Toili, Ong'unya and Songok (2013) ^[6] on the influence of teachers' gender on students' academic performance in Biology in secondary schools in Kenya, the result revealed that both male and female teachers contribute positively to the academic performance of female students than male students. It is evident from this finding that both male and female teachers provide specific feedback to their female students than their male students.

Another variable investigated on the use of specific feedback is years of teaching experience. Experience is the understanding and skill that have been acquired through doing something over a period of time (Hornby, 2000) ^[3]. In other words, experience is the knowledge one acquired by doing something repeatedly. Teachers' years of experience is the skill acquired by the teacher over a period of time in the teaching profession. An adage says "experience is the best teacher." This saying shows how important "experience" is. Teachers' experience has been perceived to be one of the most important factors in teachers' effectiveness. It is a common belief that teachers with long years of teaching are highly experienced than teachers with moderate or fewer years of teaching experience. Teachers differ in their years of teaching experience and these difference also exist among primary school teachers in Egor L.G.A

This research has identified three levels of teachers based on their years of teaching experience in Egor LGA; high experienced teachers (21 years and above), moderately experienced teachers (11-20 years) and low experienced teachers (1-10 years). The question that comes to mind, are these categories of teachers using the skills they have acquired over the years to enhance students' academic performance by a way of providing specific feedback? If these teachers can channel these skills into the teaching profession at the primary school level, the rate of school dropout will be reduced at the secondary and tertiary level and our schools will be able to produce high-quality graduates that will help manage the nation's economy effectively.

In a study carried out by Oyewole (2015), it was revealed that that, years of teaching experience influences students’ academic performance. this implies that teachers who are highly experienced performed better than those with less experience. Hence most administrators prefer high or moderate experienced teachers to handle strategic classes in their schools. These variations in teachers’ years of experience might influence the use of specific feedback mechanism among primary school teachers. Orluwene (2017) [7] studied the influence of teachers’ years of experience on classroom assessment-related activities by secondary school teachers in Rivers State. The result shows that teachers across the different years of experience do not moderately practice classroom assessment related activities except for paper and pencil and ascertaining test ethical issues, though a significant difference was obtained. Hanushek (1996) [2] revealed that the numbers of years of experience among others are consistently related to student's performance. The implication of this is that students who are taught by teachers with long years of experience, do well academically than their counterparts with fewer years of experience. In another study carried out by Oyewole (2008) on the influence of teaching experience on job performance of secondary school teachers showed that there was a significant relationship between teachers’ years of experience and job performance, Therefore, highly experienced teachers teach better than less experienced teachers.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study is to determine the factors that influence the use of specific feedback mechanism among primary school teachers. Specifically, the objectives of this study were to investigate the:

1. Influence of gender on the use of specific feedback mechanism among primary school teachers.
2. Influence of years of teaching experience on the use of specific feedback mechanism among primary school teachers.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the conduct of this study.

1. To what extent does gender influence teachers’ use of specific feedback among primary school teachers?
2. To what extent does teachers’ years of experience influence their use of specific feedback among primary school teachers?

Hypotheses

1. Gender do not significantly influence teachers’ use of specific feedback.
2. Years of teaching experience do not significantly influence teachers’ use of specific feedback.

Methodology

The ex-post facto research design was used for this study. The population of the study consist of all the 912 public primary school teachers (59 males and 853 females) in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. A sample size of 450 public primary school teachers drawn via Multi-stage sampling methods (Simple random sampling, non-proportionate stratified random sampling, and accidental sampling

techniques) was used to compose the sample at different stages. Taro Yamen’s formula for sample size was used to obtain an estimated minimum sample size of 276, in order to obtain a sample size that will be a true representative of the population 174 was added to make a sample size of 450, which forms 49.34% of the entire population. The instrument used to collect data for this study was titled “Teachers’ Use of Specific Feedback Mechanism Scale (TUSFMS). Research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation, while the hypotheses were tested using independent sample t-test and one-way Analysis of Variance were appropriate.

Results

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation and Independent sample t-test extent teachers’ gender influence the use Specific feedback.

Gender	N	M	MD	SD	df	t	P-value	Result
Male	59	33.88	3.39	12.28	391	2.65	0.000	P< 0.05
Female	334	37.27		8.37				sig

From Table 1, it is shown that the mean scores of the male and female teachers are 33.88 (SD = 12.28) and 37.27 (SD = 8.37) respectively. This yielded a mean difference of 3.39. This means female teachers use specific feedback more than their male counterpart. The result is an indication that the extent to which male and female teachers use specific feedback is low. However female teachers use specific feedback more than their male counterparts because a mean difference of 3.39 was obtained in favour of female teachers. When this mean difference was subjected to an independent sample t-test, a calculated t-value of 2.65 was obtained at df of 391 at 0.000 level of significance (p<0.05). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected meaning teachers differ significantly in the use of specific feedback based on their gender.

Table 2a: Mean and Standard deviation extent teachers’ years of experience influence the use of specific feedback

Levels of Experience	N	Mean	SD
Low Exp.	167	36.23	9.72
Moderate Exp.	92	37.79	6-93
High Exp.	134	36.72	9.68

From Table 2a, it is shown that the mean scores of teachers with low, moderate and high years of teaching experience are 36.23 (SD=9.72), 37.79 (SD = 6.93) and 36.72 (SD = 9.68) respectively. The result also showed that teachers with low, moderate and high years of experience use specific feedback at a low extent. However, teachers with moderate years of experience slightly use specific feedback more than their counterparts with low and high years of experience, because the mean scores of teachers with moderate years of experience is 37.79 as against the mean scores of 36.23 and 36.72 of low and high experienced teachers.

Table 2b: One-way ANOVA extent teachers’ years of experience influence the use of specific feedback.

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	P-value	Result
Between	145.78	2	72.89	0.874	0.418	P> 0.05
Within	32509.21	390	83.36			not sig
Total	32654.99	392				

From Table.2b it is shown that when the mean of Low, Moderate and High years of teaching experience is subjected to one-way ANOVA, a Sum of Squares Between yielded 145.78 with a df of 2 and Mean Square of 72.89. The Sum of Squares Within yielded 32509.21 at a df of 390 and a Mean Square of 83.36. The Sum of Squares Total yielded 32654.99 with df of 392. A calculated F-value of 0.874 was obtained at 390 which is not statistically significant at a chosen alpha level significance of 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). This means there is no significant difference between teachers with low, moderate and high years of teaching experience in their use of specific feedback in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.

Discussion

From the findings in Table 1, it was revealed that teachers' gender significantly influences the use of specific feedback. The result also revealed that male and female teachers use specific feedback at a low extent, although it was in favor of the female teachers. That is to say, female teachers use specific feedback more than the male teachers. The female teachers have been able to prove that despite the Bible has labeled them as weaker vessels, they have been able to use their weakness to provide specific feedback to their pupils more than their male counterparts whom the Bible labeled as stronger vessels. On the other hand, one would have thought that these male teachers will channel their strength into their teaching jobs. This finding is in line with the findings of Orluwene and Oddiri (2016) who found out that the percentage of male and female teachers who use specific feedback and non-specific feedback is low. Also, the present finding is in line with the findings of Kati *et al.* (2013) who found out that the academic performance of primary school pupils in Mathematics is greatly influenced by the gender of the teacher. That is to say the high or low achievement scores of primary school pupils in Mathematics might be attributed to the gender of the teacher. The result from this study is not in agreement with Nabwire *et al.* (2013)^[6] who found out that both male and female teachers contribute equally to achievement scores of students in Biology. That is there was no significant difference in the performance of students taught by male or female teachers. These findings are not surprising being that there are more female teachers in the primary schools than the male. And also many teachers are yet to understand the importance of specific feedback in class activities.

From Table 2b, the findings revealed that years of experience do not significantly influence the use of specific feedback mechanism. The result as shown in Table 2b that teacher uses specific feedback at a low extent irrespective of their years of teaching experience. That is teachers with low, moderate and high years of teaching experience using specific feedback to a low extent. That is these categories of teacher have the same rate of usage. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Orluwene (2017)^[7] who found out that teachers across the different years of teaching experience do not moderately practice classroom assessment related activities except for paper and pencil and ascertaining test ethical issues. Also, the present finding is in agreement with the findings of Oyewole (2008) who found out that teachers' job performance across the different years of experience is low. This means teachers' productivity is low irrespective of the years of experience. This finding is surprising because it is expected that the high and moderate experienced teachers would be more productive in their teaching job and provide specific feedback

more to their pupils more than the low experienced teachers. The reason could be that the age of these teachers is now affecting their productivity.

Conclusion

Primary school teachers in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State have been found to use specific feedback to a low extent in terms of their gender and years of teaching experience. No wonder their pupils fail examination questions even when such questions had been given to them before during classwork or homework. One possible reason why these teachers do not adequately use specific feedback could be that these teachers do not understand what specific feedback is and how to use it.

Recommendations

Based on the results on the extent to which teachers' gender and years of teaching experience influence the use of specific feedback mechanism among primary school teachers, it is hereby recommended that:

1. School Administrators should organize workshops and seminars for their teachers on the importance and use of specific feedback at the beginning of every session.
2. More male teachers should be employed in primary schools.
3. On the basis of the result that years of experience does not significantly determine usage of specific feedback, teachers should be provided with ample training opportunity and continuous professional development on specific feedback mechanism.

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