



Instructional Materials for Teaching of Economics: Availability and Utilization in Senior Secondary Schools

Dr. O. C. Ikpesu & *Appah, Courage Nkem

**Department Of Business Education,
Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
*courage.appah@yahoo.ca**

ABSTRACT

The study reviewed instructional materials in teaching economics in senior secondary schools: availability and utilization. The study looked at the concepts of instructional materials, classification/types and teaching of Economics. Teaching is a set of events designed to initiate, activate, support learning and teaching involves all activities that are geared towards the transfer of knowledge. Teaching economics to students help people learn how to choose and make use of their limited resources which have alternative uses in producing and distributing goods and services and exchanging them for consumption purposes in a growing and changing society. Teaching Economics like every other subject requires the use of instructional materials to help make teaching more understandable and meaningful. The findings of the study revealed that Instructional materials are very important factors in teaching and effective teaching cannot take place without the availability and utilization of basic relevant instructional materials. The researcher therefore recommended that Instructional materials for teaching of economics should be made adequately available as well as optimally utilized in senior secondary schools in Rivers State by government and other stakeholders as this will help improve the performance of students in economics.

Keywords: Instructional Materials, Teaching, Economics, Utilization, Availability.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a transformational process that involves the transfer of knowledge and skills from a more experienced individual (teacher) to the learner. Teaching fosters behavioral change in the learner. Teaching is a set of events designed to initiate, activate and support learning (Koko, 2015). Teaching involves all activities that are geared towards the transfer of knowledge. Teaching economics to students in a clear and unbiased manner supports beginner students, master the essential principles of understanding the economizing problem, specific economic issues, help the student to understand and apply economics in a precise and empirical manner on economic issues and promote a lasting student interest in issues of economics (Chakra, 2016).

The teaching of economics is indispensable in any country that is interested in providing training techniques and tools of economic analysis and researchers who can contribute to the development of society. According to FRN (2014), Economics is one of the elective subjects to be studied at the Senior Secondary School level as presented by the National Policy on Education, developed by the Comparative Education Study and Adaptation Centre and now reviewed by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council. Teaching Economics like every other subject requires the use of instructional materials to help gain the attention of the learner and to further explain concepts. Instructional materials make teaching and learning more understandable, meaningful and easy and its benefits to teaching and learning cannot be overemphasized. The absence of instructional materials hinders the efficiency in teaching. The use of instructional materials in teaching economics remains the gateway to achieving set objectives as Ubulom and

Ogwunte (2017) emphasized that instructional resources and facilities are very necessary for the utmost realization of the goals of education.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Economics

Economics is a study of man in the ordinary business of life; it enquires how man gets his income and how he uses it. Thus, it is on the one side, the study of wealth and on the other and more important side, a part of the study of man. Economics is a science which studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses (Robbins, 1932 as cited in Wikipedia, 2012). According to Umar, Abubakar, Modi, Shehu and Yusuf (2014), Economics is the science that studies the process and institutions whereby the limitless human wants are satiable within the limits imposed by availability of resources which have alternative uses; it shows how scarce resources can be used to increase wealth and human welfare.

Economics is important because it can answer questions such as what causes inflation and why are people unemployed? Economics is the study of labour, land, investments of money, income, production, taxes and government expenditures.

Economics is the study of how societies use scarce re-sources to produce valuable commodities and distribute them among people (Samuelson & Nordhaus, 1992 as cited in Khumalo, 2012, p. 598). Blaug (2019) opined that Economics is social science that seeks to analyze and describe the production, distribution, and consumption of wealth. As the world continually focuses on business, it takes economists to help decipher trends and to help to make good financial decisions. Economics give room for both individuals and institutions to adequately manage scarce resources and to ensure the even distribution and allocation of resources to various units that will bring about development.

Objectives of Economics

Andrew and Michael (2014) outlined the objectives of learning economics to include the following:

1. Students will learn how markets and other government structures organize core economic activities, such as production, distribution, and consumption, and the growth of productive resources;
2. Students will be able to identify and explain economic concepts and theories related to the behaviour of economic agents, markets, industries and firms structures, legal institutions, social norms, and government policies;
3. Students will learn about the determinants of macroeconomic conditions (national output, employment, and inflation), causes of business cycles, and interactions of monetary and financial markets with the real economy, familiarizing themselves in the process with major economic theories of relevance;
4. Students will be able to describe the main macroeconomic theories of short term fluctuations and long term growth in the economy;
5. Students will be able to critically evaluate the consequences of basic macroeconomic policy options under differing economic conditions within a business cycle;
6. Students will become familiar with the origins and implications of processes of international economic integration and differentiation, the basic features of the international financial and monetary systems, and their implications for national economic policy;
7. Students will become familiar with the history of economic thought and the controversies between its major schools of thought and contrasting theoretical approaches.
8. Students will develop the communication skills necessary into succeed in securing professional employment or admission to appropriate post-graduate programs;
9. Students will develop the analytical and empirical skills necessary to succeed in securing professional employment or admission to appropriate post-graduate programs; and
10. Students will be able to analyze research questions with the use of econometric techniques.

Consequently, they will be able to identify data and model specification issues; select and implement suitable multiple regression techniques based on their analysis of error structures; and conduct basic analyses of time-series data. The understanding of economics is a pre-requisite for

good citizenship. Kasim and Usman (2015) maintained that the principal objective for teaching economics is to provide economics understanding necessary for responsible citizenship; being a responsible citizen involves the ability to take rational decision on important economic issues with a good basis for doing so.

NERDC (2008 as cited in Oleabhie & Oleabhie, 2015, p. 1) outlined the objectives of the Economics as to enable students: understand basic economic principles and concepts as well as the tools for sound economic analysis; contribute intelligently to discourse on economic reforms and development as they affect or would affect the generality of Nigerians; understand the structure and functioning of economic institutions; appreciate the role of public policies on national economy; develop the skills and also appreciate the basis for rational economic decisions; become sensitised to participate actively in national economic advancement through entrepreneurship, capital market and so on; understand the role and status of Nigerian and other African countries in international economic relationships; and appreciate the problems encountered by developing countries in their effort towards economic advancement. The teaching of economics like every other subject requires the presence of instructional materials as Koko (2016) maintained that good teaching does not emanate except from adequate preparations and utilization of essential learning materials in teaching.

Concept of Instructional Materials

Instructional materials have been identified as very important factors in teaching and that effective teaching cannot take place without availability of basic relevant instructional materials. Instructional materials, according to Wambui, (2013), are tools locally made or imported that could make tremendous improvement of a lesson if intelligently used. Instructional materials are very essential elements in the teaching and learning process of any subject as Economics. Instructional materials provide the physical media through which the intents of the curriculum are experienced. Oluwagbohunmi and Abdu-Raheem (2014) acknowledged that instructional materials are such used by teachers to aid explanations and make learning of subject matter understandable to students during teaching learning process.

Instructional materials are collections of materials and equipment that processes instruction and training; such materials and equipment may be derived from the objectives of teaching and learning. Instructional materials are tools that help the teacher in teaching; any natural materials; teacher or student made materials as well as any manufactured objects which promote good teaching and learning (Koko 2015). Abdu-Raheem (2016) views Instructional Materials as essential and significant tools needed for teaching and learning of school subjects to promote teachers efficiency and improve students' performance. This means that Instructional Materials serve as a guide to the teaching and learning processes through the logical and sequential preparation and presentation of lessons. Instructional materials can be collectively said to be all the things that are used to support, facilitate, influence or encourage acquisition of knowledge, competency and skill. Instructional Materials assist in putting across information and enable both teaching and learning to be effectively done.

Classification/Types of Instructional Materials

Instructional materials are materials of visual, audio and audio - visual category that helps to make concepts, abstracts and ideas concrete in the teaching and learning process (Kasim & Usman, 2016). They are also materials which the teacher uses in supplementing his teachings. According to Ochoma (2016) instructional materials can be classified as follows:-

1. Printed and reference materials: Textbooks, newspapers, magazines, government documents, teachers' guide, duplicated materials, journals, hand book, bulletins, pictures, work books, pamphlets, and leaflets.
2. Graphic materials: Graphs, charts, diagram, maps, globes.
3. Display materials: Chalkboard, bulletin boards, flat pictures, magnet boards and flannel board.
4. Projected materials: Television, video tape, overhead projector, slides and slide projector and transparencies.

5. Audio and other visual materials: Radio, model, computer, tape recording etc.

According to Akpan and Okoli (2017), Instructional materials can be divided into three major categories based on their sensory appeal, namely; audio, visual and audio-visual. Audio Instructional materials are those that appeal to the auditory sense such as radio, audio tapes. Visual Instructional materials appeal to the sense of sight and they come in the form of pictures, prints, real objects (models), CDs to mention but a few. Audio-visuals appeal to both the auditory and visual senses of the learner and stimulate interest to learn. Such materials take the form of films, television, audio-visual tapes, CDs, VCDs, DVDs and other high definition electronic devices.

Instructional materials are materials used to facilitate learning for better results which includes the use of the chalkboard, charts, models, overhead projectors, films, television and computers in teaching process. The importance of instructional materials in enhancing effective teaching of economics cannot be undermined due to the positive impact it has on the level of assimilation of students. Instructional materials have been observed as a powerful strategy to bring about effective teaching and learning (John, 2016). The importance of quality and adequate instructional materials in teaching and learning can occur through their effective utilization during classroom teaching. Instructional materials here include all the tools that the teachers can use to make the learning more interesting and memorable

Benefits of Instructional Materials

Instructional materials are versatile tools that are used in different ways for effective teaching and learning. These aids convey facts and ideas in all forms and offer quite an easy way of presenting information. According to Olatan (2004), some of the importance of instructional materials if carefully selected includes the fact that they:

1. Help to give correct initial concept.
2. Help students to learn more.
3. Spread learning processes.
4. Provide experiences which are not known before.
5. Clarify and give definite meaning of words and the combat verbalism;
6. Intensify expressions.
7. Arouse interest by attracting attention.
8. Build and sustain interest.
9. Motivate, develop and change attitudes.
10. Vitalize instruction and provide variety in teaching.
11. Saves time of economics teachers and students.
12. Supplement other learning and serves as reminder.

Instructional materials have direct contact with the sense organs. Pupils are able to use a combination of senses (smell, hearing, touch, taste and sight) for easier and better acquisition of concepts and facts they are being taught (Olumiran, Ajidagba & Jakeyinfra, 2010). Akpan and Okoli (2017) outlined the specific benefits of Instructional Materials to teachers to include the fact that;

1. Instructional materials help the teacher in providing the means of widening his pupils learning experience.
2. Providing his pupils with meaningful source of information.
3. Provide the teacher the means of exposing the pupils to a wide range of learning activities.
4. Increase the efficiency of the teacher by providing tutorials and response guidance for individual pupils and small groups.
5. Instructional materials bring experts and learning resources to the classroom, and allow members of a group or class to share equally from the same teaching experience.

According to Akpan and Okoli (2017), the benefits of Instructional Materials to the students include;

1. Instructional materials can facilitate learning by arousing the learners' interest.
2. Instructional materials sustain attention.
3. Provides the learners with opportunities of interacting with their social and physical environment.
4. Offers opportunity for independent and individualized learning.
5. Create concrete basis for conceptual thinking.

6. Offers opportunities for learners to develop their abilities and skills.

Instructional materials, according to Balogun (2004), assist economics teachers in the achievement of stated objectives and also help the teachers to make lesson explicit to the students. FRN (2014), states that the objectives of learning materials are; to enhance teaching and improve the competence of teachers; to make learning more meaningful for students and to develop and promote the effective use of innovative materials in schools. Instructional materials are very important in the realization of education goals. Thus, must be made available and utilized appropriately to enhance teaching.

Availability and Utilization of Instructional Materials

The need for the utilization of instructional materials cannot be over emphasized. It is the life wire of the instructional process and has far-reaching successful outcomes. Abdu-Raheem (2011) attributes the ineffectiveness of the school system and poor performance of students in schools to the non-availability and inadequacy of instructional materials. There is no doubt that availability of instructional materials in the right quantity improves pupils' learning achievement. Adequacy of instructional materials alone however, may not guarantee learners' achievement. These materials need to be utilized effectively to achieve the desired objective.

Utilization is the degree or extent to which an item has been put into effective use (Abdulkareem and Fasasi, 2012). According to Uko (2015), various degrees of utilization include non-utilization, under-utilization, maximum utilization, optimum utilization and over-utilization. Non-utilization occurs when a facility is not put into use at all and when a facility is not used in its full capacity, underutilization occurs. There is over-utilization when a facility is used more than its capacity. These degrees of utilization constitute a waste of resources and are counterproductive. On the other hand maximum utilization occurs when facilities are put into effective usage in line with primary objectives. Optimum utilization occurs when facilities are used for many purposes. Resources put into maximum and optimum usage are not wasted; they are likely to enhance achievement of educational objectives. Utilization of Instructional Materials in teaching and learning process is vital to the educational goals and objectiveness but when it is not available learners cannot do well (Ogbaji, 2017).

Availability here means access to instructional materials needed for teaching Economics. A lot of factors confront the effective teaching of Economics in secondary school which includes lack of instructional materials amongst others (Ogbonna, 2014). Non-availability and inadequacy of instructional materials are major causes of ineffectiveness of the school system and poor performance of students in schools (Abdu-Raheem, 2011). Uko (2015) revealed that the unsatisfactory performance often experienced in schools by students and educational programs is always attributed to lack of basic infrastructure/instructional materials, lack of adequate and accurate statistics, inadequate funding, embezzlement, bureaucratic bottleneck and poor attitude to work. Today, teachers under rate the use of instructional materials in most of their teaching exercises and some of these materials are not usually available for teachers' use.

Akinloye, Audu and Audu (2015) affirmed that the condition of teaching equipment and facilities is perhaps the most nagging problem in the Nigerian secondary school system. Akinloye *et al* stressed that in most schools across the federation, there is inadequacy of basic infrastructure required for effective teaching and learning. Laboratories and libraries are either non-existent or very poorly equipped. How could one expect candidates to perform well in schools with no laboratory, no microscope or apparatus, no books in the library and no audio-visual teaching aids. Emunemu, Audu and Yusuf (2014) earlier asserted that an institution, which lacks essential equipment, should not expect to reasonably achieve its desired objectives.

It has been observed that most teachers of economics still resort to the teaching of the subject without the use of instructional materials which is contrary to the growth of economics education; that is greatly needed at this period of our development with emphasis on practical oriented learning. Investigation shows that not much of the required instructional materials are utilized for teaching of Economics in Secondary schools in Rivers State as teachers decry the poor availability of instructional materials. Most teachers cling to verbal instruction as the only way to impart knowledge. The researcher is of the view that something has to be done to change teachers' negative

attitude towards the teaching of economics. The researcher is also of the view that utilization of instructional materials would make teaching of economics interesting and comparatively easy and that instructional materials for teaching economics should be selected, supplied and used effectively.

CONCLUSION

Teaching of Economics is indispensable in any country that is interested in providing training techniques and tools of economic analysis and researchers who can contribute to the development of society. Teaching Economics like every other subject requires the use of instructional materials which makes teaching and learning more understandable and meaningful. Despite the importance of instructional materials to the teaching process; teachers of public secondary schools in Rivers State still carry out teaching without the use of instructional materials. Economics teachers in Rivers State secondary schools are not exempted as they decry the poor availability of instructional materials.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the study, the researcher recommends as follows:

1. Instructional materials for teaching of economics should be made adequately available in senior secondary schools in Rivers State by government and other stakeholders as this will help improve the performance of students in economics.
2. Economics teachers should improvise in situations where instructional materials are not readily available to teach economics in the senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
3. Economics teachers should ensure the optimal utilization of instructional materials in teaching economics in senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
4. School administrators should ensure that Economics teachers undergo training/retraining on the use of instructional materials as to enhance their ability in utilizing instructional materials.

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