



Exploring the Challenges and Possibilities of Using Learner-Centered Approach to Teach in Nigeria Public Secondary Schools.

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ABSTRACT

Teaching is a universal human experience, a process of passing down information from generation to generation. Teaching is a deliberate activity done in a professional manner to bring a positive change in the learner; in order to teach well. The 21st-century student, as a digital native, has access to a mobile phone and can surf the internet, they do not want a teacher that will come to the class and still write what they have in their textbook and online, they want to be engaged academically, yet the Nigeria education, most especially secondary level are still rooted in using the traditional method of teaching in the classroom despite the outcry to shift the paradigm from teacher-centered approach to learner-centered approach, Therefore, this study aims to explore the challenges and possibilities of using the learner-centered approach to teach in Nigeria public secondary schools. The research is based on a qualitative research approach while a case study research design was used to explore the phenomenon under consideration, and constructivism theory was used as the theoretical foundation. Three research questions were raised to guide the conduct of this study, thematic coding was used to analyze the interviews where themes such as challenges (class size, attention problem, lack of teaching aids, financial constraints, student attitude, lack of teaching aids, time learner differences, unavailability of instructional material, environmental factors) and possibilities (class size reduction, government intervention, student positive attitude to learn, provision of infrastructure, teaching in area of specialization, teacher professional development) that emerged. The findings of the research show there are numerous possibilities indicating learner-centered approach can be put into practice in Nigeria despite all the challenges that teachers who have and are willing to use this approach encounter.

Keywords: Challenges, Possibilities, Teaching Methods, Learner-Centered, Teacher-Centered

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a universal human experience, a process of passing down information from generation to generation. Teaching is a deliberate activity done in a professional manner to bring positive change to the learner (Dorgu, 2015). The learner-centered approach in education

has a long history of development. Two of the first educators to put emphasis on the learner were Confucius and Socrates (5th to 4th centuries B.C.). The 21st century students, as a digital native, have access to mobile phones and can surf the internet, they do not want a teacher that will come to the class and still write what they have in their textbook and online, they want to

be engaged mentally. The paradigm shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered pedagogy has a worldwide advocacy for its practice at all levels of education (Mascolo, 2009; Vikas, 2022). Nigeria, the most populous country in sub-Saharan Africa, is in the process of making a transition from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered mode of education. It, therefore, becomes pertinent to focus attention on its secondary education as it is the level where critical thinking is been developed.

Learner-centered pedagogy is a branch of constructivism, a belief which centered on the fact that learners build their understanding through their actions and experiences of the world. Constructivism according to Anyanwu and Iwuamadi (2015) is a theory of learning which explains the nature of knowledge and how human beings acquire learning. As Narayan et. al. (2013) explained, it maintains that individuals create, construct or create their own new understandings or knowledge through the interaction of what they already know and believe with events, ideas, or activities with which they come into contact. This means that knowledge is acquired through getting involved with the content and not just by imitating and repeating things. Learner-centered approach to teaching is conceived as an instructional philosophy and modern pedagogical approach, which is opposite to teacher centered approach, i.e., the Conventional teaching methodology in which the teacher remains at the center of instruction in the teaching learning process (Shah, 2020). Wills and Lake (2020) express that Dewey in 1938 opined that traditional way of teaching has the limitation to focus on active learning and explains that “there is no defect in traditional education greater

than its failure to secure the active co-operation of the pupil in construction of the purposes involved in his studying" (p. 67). However, teaching-focused theories like Bloom's Taxonomy of 1954 and Kolb Experiential Learning of 1984) based on John Dewey's, Kurt Lewin's and Jean Piaget's concepts of learning and a flexible approach to teaching revealed that a learner-centered approach to teaching is a paradigm shift from teacher to learner-centered, a deliberative effort to facilitate learner to achieve learning objectives by creating conducive learning environment using a variety of activities like activity based teaching with effective interactive relations between learners and teachers (Gredler, 2009; Serin, 2018). In light of the perceptions of quality education, it is like one size does not fit all paradigms because of its transition and dynamic nature. Its definition changes from person to person, community to community, and country to country from time to time, and who defines it under specific circumstances depending upon the influence of cultural, historical, local, national, international, and global perspectives (Dost, 2021; UNICEF, 2000). However, the concepts of quality education to the community are; children are given access to modern facilities like computer education according to their grade level; individual attention is given to overcome learning difficulties through learner focused teaching; teachers are given opportunities to learn through training, workshops, seminars, co-teaching with expert teachers to improve teaching learning practices; providing students with opportunities to participate in local, regional and national level competitions to show their talents; monitoring and evaluation of every teaching and learning activity is ensured through internal and external institutional

support; learning achievements are shared with parents, community and supporting institutions to encourage children to excel in curricular and co-curricular activities; high achievers, competition winners and runners-up are appreciated in the community programs to boost their morale; every event or activity is organized around learners' development and is well justified (Blumberg, n.d.). These perceptions of the school stakeholders are considered as quality standards.

To this end the researcher intends to explore the challenges and possibilities of using the learner-centered approach to teach in Nigeria public secondary schools.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Learner-centered teaching methodology has been a recurrent theme in many national education policies in the global South and has had wide donor support (Schweisfurth, 2011; Brenner et al., 2022). For years there has been a call worldwide for a shift in pedagogical practice in schools. However, it can be a challenging task to implement learner-centered education in the current education system which was designed for sorting rather than learning (An et al. 2020). Many developed and developing countries have engaged in using the learner-centered approach, yet Nigeria's secondary education is still rooted in using the traditional method of teaching in the classroom even though there are outcry to shift the paradigm from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered approach, where the student assumes the role of teacher and the teacher serving as guide. Despite the efforts, there is no positive outcome (Onwe, 2018; Malisa, 2022). Also, the researchers' experiences as a secondary school teacher in various

part of Kwara state, Nigeria it was noted that to adopt this new paradigm that is been advocated by parents and government possess some challenges. Much as awareness has been created about student-centered teaching and learning, in Nigeria education, there is still a gap in the transition from the pedagogical theory into practice as a result of some challenges encountered at that level of education (Anyanwu, 2015). To this end this research therefore wants to explore the challenges and possibilities in using a learner-centered approach as a method of teaching in Nigeria secondary schools.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the challenges experienced by teachers in using the learner-centered approach to teaching in Nigeria's public secondary schools?
2. In what ways can these challenges be overcome?
3. Are there any possibilities of putting this approach to practice?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature was done under the two teaching methods.

Teaching Methods

The teaching style was described by Ahmed (2013) as those enduring personal qualities and behaviors that appear in how educators conduct their classes. Yoshida et al. (2014) define the term teaching style as the distinct qualities exhibited by a teacher that are consistent from situation to situation regardless of the content being taught. Similarly, Dupin-Bryant (2004). Defines learner-centered teaching style as "a style of instruction that is responsive, collaborative, problem-centered, and

democratic in which both students and the instructor decide how, what, and when learning occurs” (p.42). On the other hand, a teacher-centered teaching style is considered “a style of instruction that is formal, controlled, and autocratic in which the instructor directs how, what, and when students learn” (p.42). Teaching style is made up of a range of behaviors that a teacher comfortably uses consistently over time, situation, and content (Lak et.al., 2017). International trends in education show a shift from the traditional teacher-centered approach to a student-centered approach. This model focuses on what the students are expected to be able to do at the end of the course. This approach is commonly referred to as an outcome-based approach. Statements called learning outcomes are used to express what it is expected that students should be able to do at the end of the learning period.

Teacher-centered approach.

Gill (2017), noted that teacher-centered approaches are more traditional in nature, focusing on the teacher as instructor. They are sometimes referred to as direct instruction, deductive teaching, or expository teaching, and are typified by the lecture type presentation. In these methods of teaching, the teacher controls what is to be taught and how students are presented with the information that they are to learn. Singh (2011) described teacher-centered learning as students passively receiving information, emphasis is on the acquisition of knowledge, and the teacher’s role is to be the primary information giver and primary evaluator. There is no room for student’s personal growth. Talbert et al. (2019) report that while learner-centered language teaching has been advocated in higher education in recent years, teacher-

centered teaching styles may be still dominant in actual practice. Results of their study show that most instructors still use traditional, teacher-centered styles in university settings despite the call for a paradigm shift to learner-centered ones. The traditional way of designing courses called the teacher-centered approach is to start from the content of the course. Teachers decided on the content that they intended to teach, planned how to teach this content, and then assessed the content. This approach is based on the teacher’s input and on assessment in terms of how well the students learned/reproduced the material taught. In a traditional classroom, students become passive learners, or rather just recipients of teachers’ knowledge and wisdom. They have no control over their own learning. Teachers make all the decisions concerning the curriculum, teaching methods, and the different forms of assessment. Duckworth (2009) asserts that teacher-centered learning actually prevents students’ educational growth. According to Lynch (2010), he noted that traditional teacher-led or administer-centered learning is used more frequently than student-led learning.

Learner-centered approach

Student-centered approaches (sometimes referred to as discovery learning, inductive learning, or inquiry learning) place a much stronger emphasis on the learner’s role in the learning process. When you are using student-centered approaches to teaching, you still set the learning agenda, but you have much less direct control over what and how students learn. Lele (2020) claimed that the student-centered learning approach gives students ownership over their learning and helps them make necessary decisions and value judgments

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about the relevance of the content and the methods of teaching to their own lives and interests. Wolk (2010) also reports that in student-centered learning, Students play a significant role in designing their own curriculums. The teacher plays the role of a facilitator or guide who helps students achieve their goals. In their article Ng and Lai (2012) presented an exploratory study that examined whether a wiki-based project could foster student-centered learning. Wagner (2008) concluded in their study that learner-centered approach contributed to the construction of educational activities and provided for greater student learning and a more authentic student assessment. Learner centered" is the perspective which focuses on the learners' experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs. It creates a learning environment conducive to learning and promotes the highest levels of motivation, learning, and achievement for all learners (Ahmed, 2013; Larson, 2018). Weimer (2002) proposed five areas that needed to change in order to achieve learner-centered teaching. These areas are the choice of content, the instructor's role, responsibility for learning, the process of assessment, and the power relationship between teacher and learners. Students needed to have ownership of their own learning, contribute to the design of curriculum, and the responsibility for some levels for instruction. Similarly, Bain (2004) identified several traits of instructors who employ learner-centered instruction. Among these characteristics are that instructors touch the lives of their students, they place a strong emphasis on student learning and outcomes by using varied forms of assessment, and the effect on career goals.

Aslan & Reigeluth (2015), in their of study which also explore the challenges of using learner-centered, identified this four challenges: Student mindsets Making (the switch from passive, teacher-directed learning to active, self-directed learning); Adviser time (Juggling multiple demands from managing many student projects); Math(Excluding math from project-based learning because of the unique character of math learning); Consistency across advisories Ensuring consistent grading practices and achievement of mastery by students. Learner-centered teaching is an approach in which students have control over the learning process. With the learner-centered approach, instructors function as facilitators of learning rather than lecturers. In this way, "teachers do less telling; students do more discovering." The roles of the teacher in the learner-centered approach are to design the course such that it creates a climate for optimal learning; model the appropriate expected behavior for the students; encourage students to learn from and with each other; and provide more feedback throughout the process. Usually, a menu of optional activities or assignments is presented to the students. In this way, the learner-centered method also gives students more options that allow them to serve their own learning needs. Course content is still introduced and utilized but in a more individualized way. Application of the content is also emphasized and used to develop critical-thinking skills. Learner-centered teaching forces students to play an active role in their education, as opposed to the more passive role traditionally used. In other disciplines, the learner-centered approach promoted more in-depth learning and facilitated students' development into independent

learners (Aslan & Reigeluth,2015). Dewey (1938) he asserts that traditional way of teaching has the limitation to focus on active learning and explains that "...there is no defect in traditional education greater than its failure to secure the active co-operation of the pupil in construction of the purposes involved in his studying" (p. 67).

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE AND METHODS

The research focused on secondary school teachers in Nigeria who have used a learner-centered approach to teach in a classroom setting. This study used a qualitative case study design to explore the study, the researcher used a semi-structured interview with five (5) teachers from different secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis, Nigeria. Purposive sampling techniques were used to select the participants for this study because not all teachers are using the techniques under exploration. The participants (male and female) were assured that the information they shared would be kept confidential and they provided permission to have the interview recorded. Interviews were conducted face-to-face.

Teacher’s profile: description of the interviewee

School (Pseudonym)	Teacher (Pseudonym)	Highest Education Level	Years of Teaching
Adeola Sec. School	Mrs. Ologo	BSc	15
Bishop Smith High School	Mrs. Mary	MEd	12

St. Anthony Sec. School	Mr. Abraham	MEd	5
C&S Sec. School	Mr. Ajala	BSc	10
Trailblazer Sec. School	Mrs. Ade	BSc	8

Informed by many qualitative studies, data analysis was primarily inductive while guided by the research questions and literature. Each of the five interviews was transcribed manually by the researcher to promote insight into and understanding of participants’ responses which promoted accuracy, analysis, and participant anonymity. A follow-up member check was conducted with each of the five teachers so that the participants could review and edit, if necessary, their interview transcript to promote accuracy. The researcher analyzed the five transcripts manually and themes and sub-themes emerged during the process. Resch et al. (2010) defines a theme as “a statement of meaning that runs through all or most of the pertinent data, or one in the minority that carries heavy emotional or factual impact” (p. 150). These categories in order of coded transcripts were the participant challenges experience and the possibilities of using the approach in the future.

Theoretical framework

The theory that guides this research is the constructivism learning theory. This is a learning theory that places significant emphasis on the active engagement of learners in the process of constructing their own understanding. Instead of being passive recipients of information,

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learners engage in reflective processes, construct cognitive representations, and integrate novel knowledge into their existing schemas. This facilitates the cultivation of enhanced levels of learning and comprehension. According to Elliott et al. (2000), constructivism is an educational perspective that posits individuals as active participants in the process of constructing their own knowledge. It further asserts that the perception of reality is shaped by the learner's experiences. This implies that educators must possess the conviction that students possess the capacity for critical thinking and generating original ideas. The foundation of constructivist learning theory supports a range of instructional approaches and strategies that prioritize student-centered learning, in contrast to the conventional model of education where teachers primarily impart knowledge to students in a passive manner. A constructivist classroom places emphasis on active learning, collaborative activities, the examination of concepts or problems from several viewpoints, reflective practices, student-centered approaches, and genuine assessment methods. This theory is perfect for this research because it focuses on learner-centered approach and how it is constructed which is the main focus of this article.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section deals with the result generated from the participant's interview. The research generated several themes, this was presented below based on research questions.

Research question one: what are the challenges experienced by teachers in using learner learner-centered approach in Nigeria public secondary schools?

These are the difficulties the teachers pass through during the process of using the learner-centered approach to teaching in the class. When asked about the challenges that the respondents undergo in using the learner-centered approach to teaching, themes such as class size, attention problems, lack of teaching aids, financial constraints, student attitude, lack of teaching aids, time learner differences, unavailability of instructional material, environmental factors emerged from the data.

Class size

This refers to the number of students in a classroom. The respondents expressed that most of the Nigeria secondary schools are over-populated and using this approach in such condition was difficult to them. They noted that while they were teaching some students are learning while others are using it as an avenue to carry out other activities while some other students will hide under the cover of high achievers in the class. Another participant expressed that the class size is so large that cannot even walk among the students.

This is what a participant says.....

“... the large population that we have caused a lot of problems because some will learn while others will hide under those that know what they are doing, and others will be playing....” Mrs. Ologo

Another participant said...

“..... the normal population in a class is supposed to be 30 to 35 but in a situation where we have 80, 120 or 170 students in a class it will not work....” Mrs. Mary

“.....in my own class, I have 110 students and another class they are 91 (there are two arms), you cannot even work among the students talk less of arranging the class in a way that will make learner centered easy.so over-populated class is one of the problems....” Mr. Ajala

This is in line with Ajayi (2002) and Omoregie (2005) reported that Nigeria secondary schools are riddled with crises of various dimensions and magnitude such as large class size, inadequate fund, among others.

Attention problem.

This refers to the difficulty of maintaining students' focus and engagement during the learning process. In a learner-centered approach, the emphasis is on active participation, collaboration, and personalized learning experiences. However, the participants expressed that varying student backgrounds contribute to distractions and reduced attention spans. They further expressed that using this method to capture their attention and maintain it is still a problem for them. This theme highlights the difficulty educators face in maintaining students' focus and engagement in a classroom environment, which is essential for effective learning centered teaching.

In a learning-centered approach, where active participation and critical thinking are encouraged, attention problems can hinder the effectiveness of the method. Engaging students in discussions, group activities, or hands-on experiments becomes difficult if they are not fully attentive or if their environment is not conducive to learning. Here is what a participant said....

“..... when you focus on some group others may continue doing another thing that they will not listen to you....” Mr. Abraham

another participant asserted that,

“..... most times when you are using this approach, to manage and get the attention of each student is always very difficult unlike when you are using the lecture method, so this is a serious challenge that I face as a person....” Mr. Ade

This is in line with Dewey (1938) he asserts that traditional way of teaching has the limitation to focus on active learning and explains that "...there is no defect in traditional education greater than its failure to secure the active co-operation of the pupil in construction of the purposes involved in his studying" (p. 67).

Lack of teaching aids

Teaching aids encompasses a diverse array of tools and resources. These include textbooks, visual aids, digital technology, laboratory equipment, and manipulative materials. These elements are essential in facilitating interactive and captivating learning experiences. The absence of these tools in most public secondary schools in Nigeria is a hindrance to teachers' capacity to use learner-centered approach that fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and active student engagement. All the participants expressed that lack of instructional materials poses difficulty on their ability to enhance the dynamism and practicality of class activities, resulting in a dependence on the traditional method that prioritize memorization through repetition. This phenomenon poses a hindrance to the cultivation of students'

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abilities in critical thinking, creativity, and the practical application of knowledge, all of which are pivotal for their prospective achievements.

“.....another thing is the materials that we are supposed to use in this method because if we give them the topic and the teaching aid they are supposed to use, some are expensive and difficult to lay their hand on it so when this occurs, they will not be able to handle the topic properly.....”
Mrs. Ologo

Another participant shares a similar view, he expressed that the student doesn't have access to the laboratory, so many times he wants to use the approach but what will facilitate it is not available. Here is what he said,

“..... even basic laboratory equipment is in short supply. Our students miss out on hands-on science experiments that are crucial for their understanding. It's frustrating when you want to teach using a learning-centered approach but lack the tools to do so.....” Mr. Ade

The findings are in line with the work of Agun (1992) who defined instructional materials as those materials that are helpful to the teachers and students, and which maximize learning in various areas. Lack of teaching aid is the challenge that this approach is facing.

Financial Constraints

This means that there is not enough money to provide the best learning experience. This can lead to problems like crowded classrooms, old teaching materials, and teachers not getting enough training among others. The participants expressed that the lack of

money is a major challenge to use the learner-centered approach, A participant noted sometimes the school principal doesn't give them money to get some materials for practical work. Another participant said to make things better, schools need more money from the government or help from private groups to improve classrooms, give teachers better tools, and train them properly. This way, students can have a more engaging and effective way of learning.

one of the participants has this to say

“..... a financial constraint is one of them because they need money to get the materials that they need because most time the principal of the school might not disburse money as at when due, and government is not helping matter....” (Mr. Ade)

Mrs. Ajala expressed that the money the government is allocating to education is so small, yet they don't allow schools to task the students due to the free education policy. Here is what she said.

“....one of the most pressing challenges we face is resource shortages. Our school lacks the financial resources to get some of the things we need, government is not helping either, the money they are allocating to education is small and they don't allow individual schools to collect money from the student. Acquiring these resources can be quite costly, and it's a hurdle we need to overcome....” Mr. Abraham

This is supported by a survey conducted on primary education cost, financing, and management in Federal Capital Territory, Kogi, Kwara, and Niger states, it was

discovered that only 9.57% of the schools in Kwara and 27.08% of the schools in FCT had school libraries while none of the schools in both Kogi and Niger States had any school library. It was also found that 24% of schools in Kogi state, 21% of schools in Kwara state, 40.3% of schools in Niger state, and 16.75% of schools in FCT did not use any form of wall chart teaching aids (Adulkareem & Umar, 1997).

Student attitude

The attitude of students towards a particular method or approach is very important. The participants expressed that the way the students behaved when they were using the method was not encouraging, initially, they didn't have an interest in doing anything and then asking them to do things by themselves became a bigger problem. Another participant expressed that most students in public schools are used to being spoon-fed asking them to do things in groups or doing some activities alone doesn't sit well with them.

Mr. Ajala has this to say....

“.....The attitude of the students is not encouraging they did not want to do anything talk more of asking them to do the learning by themselves.” Mrs. Mary

“..... our students are used to being spoon-fed, they don't even want to use their brain for thinking now asking them to do things on their own or in the group is a big problem for them, they are not ready for any work....” Mr. Ajala

This is against the work of Cheang, Kai I. (2009), which focuses on the effect of learner-centered teaching on

motivation and learning strategies in a third-year pharmacotherapy course, the findings show that learner-centered approach was effective in a third-year pharmacotherapy course in promoting certain domains of students' motivation and learning strategies. Specifically, the approach seems to improve students' attitudes and intrinsic motivation, as well as critical-thinking strategy.

Time constraint

Time Constraint is a term that defines various factors that limit projects in terms of time. This includes deadlines, workload management, and resource allocation and time allocation in class. One of the participants expressed that the time allotted for each class does not seem enough to organize the students to talk less of using the approach effectively.

One of the participants has this to say....

“.....the challenge that I encounter while using the approach is that it consumes time, for example, the time stipulated for any period is 40 minutes, so when I started the lesson before I could finish so those that I called the slow learner couldn't get anything from what we are doing, they will be looking at you as though you are performing a miracle and they will looking their colleague as though they are performing magic so as time goes on I have to stop it. Because of time constraint....” Mrs. Ajala

Another participant expressed that she had used the approach one or two times but it was time consuming

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“.....this approach is always time consuming and that is why most schools in Nigeria do not adopt this method.....” Mrs. Mary

“.....Time consuming, from my field (chemistry) most of the work is experimental and the topic need experiment and the time allocated for the subject for subject or topic is very slim and cannot be enough, before organizing equipment and other things by the teacher time has gone.” Mr. Abraham

Learner differences

Individual differences mean personal characteristics that distinguish learners from each other in the teaching and learning processes. one of the participants expressed that the students that are slow learner are finding it difficult to catch up with others in the class.

Here is what a teacher said...

“... the difference between our students because those that are slow learners or let me say those that their IQ is very low are lagging behind, because they will not contribute anything, they will be waiting for their colleague to do it all...” Mrs. Mary

This is in line with the work of Kuzgun and Deryakulu 2004, who noted that learners are unique individuals who bring a critical set of variables to each learning situation, including delicate traits as indicators of their potential and the history of achievement as signs of previous accomplishments and predictors of future performance.

Environmental factors

This involves the environment situation that learners in Nigeria find themselves in, most times this is not conducive for proper teaching and learning. A participant expressed that the school and classroom environment is not conducive for learning, there is no provision for cool system when the temperature rises, because of over-crowding, managing the class to control noise takes most of the teaching and learning time, here is what she said,

“.....the environment in the school is not conducive is not conducive enough for this method. At times if you want to use the electricity, there will be power outage and when this happened there is nothing you can do, no fan nothing the place will be stuffy so this use to affect the method.....” Mrs. Ologo

This is in line with the work of Gilavand (2016) who asserts that the learning environment dramatically affects the learning outcomes of students. Schools' open space and noise, inappropriate temperature, insufficient light, overcrowded classes, misplaced boards, and inappropriate classroom layout all make factors that could be confounding variables distracting students in class ().

Research question two (2): Are there any possibilities of putting this approach into practice?

These are various activities that can make the use of a learner-centered approach to teaching in Nigeria secondary schools possible or become a reality. These are strategies the teacher employs to assist student learning through the use of learner-centered approach. The teacher must consider the age of the learners, their level, the setting

of the class, the length of the class, and the curriculum. The teacher might use different teaching aids to reach all pupils with different learning styles and abilities (Heinrich, 2017; Oduolowu, 2011; Reinen, 2019). The entire participant has one or two things to say on this. However, class size reduction, government intervention, student positive attitude to learning, provision of infrastructure, teaching in the area of specialization, teacher professional development, teacher motivation, and improvising of instructional material) are the sub-theme that emerged from it. Here is what the participants said.

Class size reduction,

Reducing class size is an approach to managing the ratio between pupils and teachers, as it is suggested that the range of approaches a teacher can employ and the amount of attention each student will receive will increase as the number of pupils per teacher becomes smaller. A participant expressed that if the number of students per class can be reduced by constructing more classrooms, then the class can be divided, then the possibility of using the approach effectively will be high.

Here is what a participant said:

“.....it can be used if our government will help, if they can give us more structure, more classroom and if they reduce the over-populated schools, they can reduce it by building more classroom, they can also help by providing instructional materials....” Mr. Abraham

International research evidence suggests that reducing class size can have positive impacts on pupil outcomes when

implemented with socioeconomically disadvantaged pupil populations. This finding is similar to Ding and Lehrer (2010) who also found that smaller class sizes had a positive effect on student achievement in their analysis of the Project STAR data that statistically accounted for student attrition and transitions of students between test and control groups from Grades K–3.

Government intervention and provision of infrastructure

These are the various ways in which government can interfere to make the approach work. Government intervention as the term signifies refers to the involvement of the government when it comes to designing and implementing policies that will be of immense benefit to the school. One of the participants expressed that if the number of period they are taking in a day is more, then the teachers will have enough time to use this approach. Here is what she said,

“.....if the government can make a law to reduce the number of periods we are doing in school per day, each subject will have enough time for the teacher to see round, monitor the student and allow the student to do what they are expected to do on their own.....” Mrs. Ologo

Other participants share different opinion on this, he expressed that if the government intervene by giving school the infrastructure needed, the possibility of using it more becomes high, here is what he said,

“.....if they can give us more structure, more classrooms and if they reduce the over-populated schools, they can reduce it by

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building more classrooms.....”
Mr.

Ade

This is in line with the work Aregbeyen (2017) studied a panel of 40 African countries including Nigeria and found out that government funding and investment on education especially secondary schools are significantly and positively associated with high standard performance and economic growth

Student positive attitude to learn

This is the attitude showed by the student during the use of various methods under learner-centered approach, participants expressed that if the student shows positive attitude to learning in general, then teacher will be motivated to go extra mile to use this approach.

Here is what **Mrs.** Mary said.....

“.....also, if students change their attitude if they have positive attitude to learning in the future this method will work, and we as teachers will be motivated to use this approach more.”

Another participant has this to say expressed from the perspective of the teacher, he expressed that if the school motivate teachers by giving them incentives, and making policies to mandate it usage especially for new teachers, then more teachers will be forces to use this method.....

“.....We need encouragement from the administrative office by giving incentives to the teacher that goes the extra miles to ensure student learn well and also make it compulsory for a new teacher to

use the student-centered approach in teaching” Mr. Ajala

This is in line with (Syukur, 2016) which assert that, students who have positive attitudes toward their learning activity usually have rapid progress in the classroom.

Teaching in area of specialization

This is when teacher is teaching in the area where they studied in the university. One the participants expressed that there is possibilities of using this approach when more teachers should be should be employed and they should let them teach what they are expert in not assigning random subject to them.

“.....another possibility is that more teachers should be employed as in more experienced teachers, those that are relevant in the field for example if they employ a teacher to teach chemistry such teacher should not be made to teach physics, when such people are employed, they should let them teach what they are employed for.....” Mrs. Ologo

“.....assigning random subjects to teachers will not let this work, this is not their area of expertise, so if teachers were allowed to teach what they study in higher education, then the ease at which they will be able to use this learner-centered will surprise them.”

This is in line with Koledoye (2011) in his study observes that English language teachers that have master’s degree in English language or/and literature with teaching qualification perform better than

their counterparts who are without a formal English language qualification or experts but teach English language in secondary schools. He opines that teacher's knowledge about the subject affect their teaching attitude and eventually the performance of the students.

Teacher professional development

Teacher professional development is an integral part of successfully implementing a learner-centered approach in Nigerian secondary schools. It involves equipping educators with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to create an environment where students actively engage in their learning, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes. The participants expressed that appropriate training that is tailored to the use and implementation of this approach should be organized by the government, curriculum should be changed to accommodate this the usage, he further expressed that it is doable though it will take time, another participant noted that professional development that focuses on teaching strategies associated with specific curriculum content to supports teacher learning within their classroom should be done.

Here is what a participant said....

“.....to apply that method effectively will not be easy because changing the curriculum that we are already use to it involve many things we have to employ some professional, go on training put other things on ground so to change the curriculum takes a lot of time but if we can tackle all the challenges that I mention, I think it will work well in the future.....” Mr. Abraham

“.....They can also organize seminar for teachers because some are not aware of the approach and how to implement it in teaching” Mrs. Mary

This is in line with Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner, (2017), he noted that teacher professional learning is a way to support the increasingly complex skills students need to learn in order to succeed in the 21st century, Sophisticated forms of teaching are needed to develop student competencies such as deep mastery of challenging content, critical thinking, complex problem solving, effective communication and collaboration, and self-direction.

CONCLUSION

Incorporating constructivism into the learner-centered approach offers a promising avenue for addressing the challenges facing Nigeria's secondary education system. It places students at the center of the learning process, empowering them to construct their knowledge actively. However, this transformation will require a concerted effort from educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to provide the necessary support, resources, and infrastructure to make learner-centered, constructivist education a reality in Nigeria's secondary schools. Ultimately, the benefits of such an approach can contribute significantly to the country's educational quality and the future success of its students. The findings of the research show there are numerous possibilities indicating learner-centered approach can be put to practice in Nigeria despite all the challenges that teachers that have and are willing to use this approach encountered.

In the line with the findings the following recommendations were made

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- Government should provide adequate infrastructure and teaching aid to schools in Nigeria, review the curriculum to accommodate the method and time allocation for each period should be review as this will boost the usability of this approach.

- incentives to teachers should be giving top priority, serving as motivating factor for hardworking and innovative teachers if teaching are learning are to be effective.

- Orientation should be conducted on the learners on the importance of this method as it will boost their morale and make them to be active in class.

- More classrooms should be constructed as this will reduce and solve the over-population and class size problem

- Parent should encourage to enroll their wards in school that is near their place of residence, this will go a long way to solve overpopulation in some schools.

- Teachers should be made to undergo professional development, so that they can be conversant with the latest methodology and information on education around the world.

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