

TEACHERS' SKILLS IN IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT OF STUDENTS' TALENTS IN ONDO STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract. The study examined the teachers' skills in identification and management of secondary school students' talent in Ondo State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design for the study. The population of the study comprised 3462 secondary schools' teachers in Ondo Central Senatorial District while the sample consisted of 360 teachers. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select the sample. The first stage was a simple random technique to select three Local Government Areas from six Local Government Areas in the District. Proportionate sampling technique was used to select 24 secondary schools from the three Local Government Areas selected. The last stage involved using proportionate stratified random sampling to select a total of 360 teachers. Data for the study were collected using questionnaire tagged "Teachers' Skills in Identifying Students' Talents Questionnaire (TSITQ)". Data collected were analysed using frequency count and simple percentages. The results showed that the predominant skill used by teachers in identifying students' talents were Guidance and Counselling, Motivation, Creative teaching and Pedagogical. It was found out that motivational strategy (in

form of gifts, prizes and scholarship) was predominantly used by teachers in managing students' talents followed by independent study, creative teaching and programme planning. Based on the findings of the study it was therefore recommended that teachers should improve on their strategies such as independent study, creative teaching, individualised instructions and programme planning in managing secondary school students' talents.

Keywords: talents, talent management, talent identification, teacher and students

Introduction

The school as an organisation is described as an open system because it relates to its environment, it does not function in isolation. The school processes human beings and uses human beings as means of production. The school takes input from the society, refines it and releases it back to the society as output. A school possesses vital features like adaptability, workability and flexibility in order to be relevant in a world that changes every minute. Moreover, essential to school effectiveness is its ability to harmonise students' talents with subject taught and provision of an enabling environment that supports personal discovery and self-development.

Talent identification and management involve a careful and systematic placement of students' according to their outstanding qualities or abilities in order to find productive lifestyle for all students. McKinsey & Companies described talent management as an effort directed towards recruiting, selecting and re-training employees with high potentials. It is believed in this study that if organisations must enjoy a wealth of talent supplies, talents should be carefully identified and systematically managed from its raw nature. Taking talent management to the grassroots, talents identification and management is the placement or recognition of each student's strength, capabilities and deliberate development of such recognised talents in correlation with students' educa-

tional development. Students' lives are shaped and formed by the quality of education they received. Talents such as artistic and athletic are majorly considered in this study than the generality of talents. Research reports have shown that students that have talents that can be identified or managed through test scores have better chances of surviving through the school system than the artistic and athletic, who need an environment different from the normal day to the day classroom traditional uniform instructional pattern. The continual falling quality of education has shown that the school environment is a barrier to personal discovery. It has been noticed that there are two categories of students in secondary schools; the first category is those whose learning personality falls in harmony with the classroom uniform instructions which are built on academic by intellectuals, while the second category of students is those whose learning personality do not agree with the classroom uniform instructions. Those students who cannot perform like the intellectuals received labels of underachievers and failures. This has resulted in many young students leaving secondary school without completion as a result of frustration, low self-esteem inferiority complex and loss of interest.

It has been observed that careers and poor identification and management of talents have set the Nigerian secondary schools system in an accelerating regression. The purpose of the school is to develop individuals for useful living within the society and higher education as contained in FRN (2004). Secondary schools' students seem to suffer a setback in their educational development; most especially in the aspect of talent identification and management. Human beings are all born with natural gifts which make every individual a unique person in the society. Talents most often, form the basis of personal interest, learning personality, personal motivation, character and how the brain processes information. Talent gives direction and motivates the possessor to perform a given task with pleasure. Observation has shown that students of secondary schools most often lose interest in the school instructions when

they find little or no correlation between their talents and the classroom instructions. Having the little opportunity to discover and develop their talents they receive labels like low learners, low intelligence students, a failure which in turn led to their drop out of the school system.

Experience has also shown that secondary school education is based on competitiveness and students abilities are often compared in the classroom. Inferiority complex sets in here because; there will always be achievers, underachievers and failure as well as labelling students as 'Bright, Average and Failures. Qualitative education is expected to develop students towards maximisation or fully realisation and utilisation of their talents. Learning, therefore, becomes difficult and achievement retarded when little or no attention is paid to students' talents or when the school environment becomes a barrier to students' talent identification and management. The failure of secondary schools to cater for talents is gradually narrowing down the scope of education and relegating to the background the indispensable impact of students' talents on their educational development and career attainment. When an educational system fails to identify and manage the talents of students, it is likely to be destructive and could lead to disaster in the society especially in the aspect of unemployment, indiscipline, moral laxity and lack of commitment which are rapidly turning Nigeria into a nation risk. Debates are demonstrations of how different learners process information. All participants are debating the same topic, but have different viewpoints and conclusions. This is because of each person's brain process information differently. In the classroom, teacher's is trying to plant a uniform instruction and concepts into their student's head in order to give them a uniform test to ascertain they are all thinking alike. The system becomes a barrier to self-discovery and developer of negative self-esteem. If gifted are not identified, they become bored and disinterested with the content taught. In this regard, identifying and managing talents of students require a lot of exceptional skills from the teachers. Krause et al. (2003) report

that gifted learners are educationally disadvantaged. This is primarily because schools and teachers are unaware of how to appropriately cater for these learners in the school system (Langhreh, 2006). Educational enterprise involves intellectual training, technical skills, character formation and responsible citizenship. To this end, the extent to which teachers use their skills in identification and management of students' talents demand adequate attention. With a uniform instruction for all students, this may be extremely difficult for talented students. It may be more difficult to motivate a student whose talent forms the basis of his/her interest, motivation and learning personality. When such talent is not in harmony with the mode of instruction received; gifted children have special learning needs, if not met, it can lead to frustration, a loss of self-esteem, boredom, laziness and underachievement (Crocker, 2004). They are labelled failures by the educational system thereby killing their desire to learn. A good example of the school's deficiency in talent management among students is the erotic music which has taken away the beauty of African descent singing pattern from young Nigerian. Though music is an integral aspect of learning, it has been observed that it has been relegated to the background in secondary schools. Experiences also shown that students whose talents are artistic fall out of harmony with the school instruction and learn the act of talents management amidst the street gangs where they become their own teachers. The artistic learning personality respects students who have the ability to view the world from an abstract perspective, via art or music. Artists are experimental and intuitive learners. They may or may not have an interest in academics; they are labelled failures or underachievers in the school system. It has been observed that students with technical learning personality are likely to be at disadvantage in talent management in the school system if they are not given the opportunity to experiment with their ideas. In an environment where students are not allowed to experiment; they may never discover their true abilities and capabilities, on the other hand, if students with technical learning

personality have the opportunity to experiment with their ideas, they may discover their true talents and realised they are extremely brilliant. As observed by the researchers during visitations to the schools in the study areas, it was noticed that most of the schools have their technical workshops locked and key with series of technical machines. Teachers prefer to write, draw and label the machines on the chalkboard than letting the students have direct interaction with the workshop reality. The same situation was observed for a subject like Physical and Health Education, students are commonly taught in the classroom by listing out the rules and regulations govern a particular game, a number that makes as well as drawing and labelling of sizes of pitches, courts and pools on the chalkboard. Consequently, talents identification and management require giving opportunities to students to develop at their own pace and discover their abilities and capabilities through teaching process that permit learners to interact with realising situations. It is against this background that it becomes necessary to assess teachers' skills in identifying and managing students' talents in Ondo State Secondary School.

Statement of the problem

There has been a general concern about the extent to which teachers of secondary schools use their skills in Nigeria as a result of low productivity in teaching and learning most especially in the aspect of students' talents identification and management. However, poor students' talents identification and management in secondary schools do not reflect that the certified teachers have the requisites skills needed in managing students' talents. It has been observed that students most often lose interest in the school instruction when they find little or no correlation between their talents and the subjects taught. Moreover, the extent to which teacher's skills are being used to find productive lifestyle for secondary school students through talent identification and management in Ondo State, Nigeria need to be established.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the teachers' skills used in identifying talents among secondary school students. The study examines the strategies used by the teachers managing students' talents in school. The study also identifies challenges in secondary schools.

The significance of the study

The study will provide information to teachers' on the various ways in which students can manifest giftedness and how teachers can recognise these gifts by using various teachers' skills. It will also provide insight into various teachers' strategies which can be used by teachers in managing students' talents in the school system. The study will also provide information to the policy makers on the importance of formulating curriculum, developing programmes and activities as well as adapting instruction to suit the talents and interest to students in secondary schools.

Research questions

The following questions were raised to pilot the study: (1) what are the teachers' skills used in identifying students' talents in Ondo State Secondary Schools; (2) what are teachers' strategies used in managing students' talents in Secondary Schools; (3) what are the teachers' challenges in managing students' talents in Secondary Schools.

Methodology

The research design for the study was a descriptive research of the survey type. It is a descriptive because it describes the existing situation regarding teachers' skills in identification and management of students' talents in sec-

ondary schools and describes the challenges of teachers in managing students' talents without manipulation of variables.

The population for the study was all the public secondary schools in Ondo Central Senatorial District of Ondo State in 2014/2015 academic session. The targeted population was teachers of the public secondary school. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select the sample. The first stage was to select three Local Government Areas out of the six Local Government Areas in Ondo Central Senatorial District using simple random sampling technique. The second stage involves the use of proportionate sampling technique to select 24 secondary schools used in the study. The last stage involves the simple random sampling technique to select 15 teachers each from the 24 secondary schools to make a total number of 360 teachers used in the study. One research instrument titled "Teachers' Skills in Identifying and Managing of Students' Talents Questionnaire (TSIMTQ)" with three sections (ABC) was used in the study to elicit information from the teachers on their skills in Identification of Students' Talents; Strategies Used in Managing Students' Talents and Challenges faced by Teachers in Managing students' talents. The validity of the instrument was ensured by given the instrument to experts in Educational Management and Test and Measurement in Faculty of Education, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Based on their comments, suggestions and recommendations, the instrument was restructured to meet face, content and construct validity. The reliability of the instrument was determined through test-re-test method. This involves the administration of the instrument in school outside the sample schools for the study within an interval of two weeks. The two sets of scores were correlated using Pearson Moment Product Correlation. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.76 which was considered high enough for reliability. The researchers personally administered the instrument through the help of research assistants who are teachers in the se-

lected schools. Data collected were analysed using frequency and simple percentages.

Results

Research question 1: What are the teachers' skills used in the identification of students' talents in secondary schools?

Table 1. Teachers' skills in identifying students' talents in secondary schools

Teachers' Skills	A	D
Total	F (%)	F (%)
F (%)		
Motivational Skills 360(100)	245(68)	115(32)
Creative Teaching Skills 360(100)	233(64.7)	127(35.5)
Pedagogical Skills 360(100)	193(53.6)	167(46.4)
Guidance and Counselling skills 360(100)	304(84.4)	56(15.6)

Table 1 shows that out of 360 teachers under study in the study area, 245(68%) identify students' talents by using motivational skills, 233(64.7%) use creative teaching skills 193(53.6%) use pedagogical skills while 304(84.4%) use guidance and counselling skills. The predominant skill used by in identifying students' talents in the areas during the period under study is guidance and counselling skills. The results from the table also show that teachers in the study area appropriately identified students' talents because they have various skills needed for students' talents identification and they used those skills appropriately.

Research question 2: What are the teachers' strategies used in managing students' talents in secondary schools?

Table 2 indicates that teachers of secondary schools in the study area manage students' talents by using strategies such as independent study, 175(48%), creative teaching, 132(38%), programme planning 129(35.8%), motivation (184(51.1%) and individualised instruction 72(20%). The table further shows that the predominant strategy used by the teachers in managing students' talents is a motivational strategy. The table further shows that teachers in the study area do really have planned programme strategies for managing students' talents.

Table 2. Teachers' strategies in managing students' talents in secondary schools

Teachers' Strategies	Total	A	D
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Independent Study	175(48.6)	185(51.4)	
Creative Teaching	132(36)	229(64)	
Programme Planning	129(35.8)	231(64.2)	
Motivation	184(51.1)	176(48.9)	
Individualised instruction	72(20)	288(80)	360(100)

Research question 3: What are the challenges of teachers in managing students' talents in secondary schools?

Table 3 indicates that teacher encounter challenges in managing students' talents. These challenges were identified as resources, 94(26%) of the respondents claimed to have adequate resources for students' talent manage-

ment; 222(61.7%) claimed that students' population does not encourage students' talents management; 202(56.3%) claimed that time for instructions does not permit teachers to manage students' talents very well; 231(64.3%) claimed that inability of the school authority to send teachers for professional training especially in the area of students' talents management is a barrier to managing students' talents; 305(84.7%) identified students grading pattern as a hindrance to students' talents management while students' indiscipline was identified at 210(58.3%). The table further shows that that the major challenges in managing students' talents were students' grading pattern and resources. It was indicated that there is no planned assessment strategy for students' talents; the uniform assessment of students' performance which is the dominant form of students' assessment does not encourage students' talents management. Also, inadequate resources in personnel and material make the school environment unsupportive to students' talents management.

Table 3. Teachers' challenges in managing students talents in secondary school

Teachers' Strategies	A	D
Total	F (%)	F (%)
Resources	94(26)	266(74)
360(100)		
Students' Population	138(64.7)	222(61.3)
360(100)		
Time (Lesson Periods)	158(43.7)	202(56.3)
360(100)		
Professional Training	129(35.7)	231(64.3)
360(100)		
Students' Grading Pattern	305(84.7)	55(15.3)
Students' indiscipline	210(58.3)	
150(47.1)		360(100)

Discussion

The study revealed that teachers of secondary schools have some basic teachers' skills used in identifying students' talents. Though guidance and counselling were dominantly identified by teachers' and the skills used in identifying students' talents; creative teaching skills, pedagogical skills and motivational skills were as well identified. This finding stands in contrary to the research report of Krause et al. (2003), that gifted learners are labelled along with 'gifted', 'talented' or 'creative' as underachievers 'educationally disadvantaged or special needs' primarily because schools and teachers are unaware of how to appropriately cater for these learners. The finding of this study showed that though students may be tagged underachievers, labelled failures or dropouts, it is not because teachers do not have the requisite skills to identify their talents. This may be due to other factors such will be discussed under the challenges of teachers in managing students' talents. It was identified that guidance and counselling were the major skill used in identifying students' talents. Teacher inquired into each student's personality to discover their strong capabilities, they engrossed their students in purposeful communication in order to discover their challenges and interest' they close monitor these students through frequent observation with inside and outside the classroom in order to truly discover who they are. The attentions given to students' talents through guidance and counselling are in harmony with the report of Davis et al. (2004) that students require opportunities to learn, grow and challenged to strive for excellence. Other skills used by teachers in identifying students' talents in the study were motivational skills, creative teaching skills and pedagogical skills. In using motivational skills, teachers motivate students by giving prizes and gifts to students' based on their abilities to display their talents uniquely. Mentoring of students was identified as teachers' pattern of motivation. On creative teaching skills, teachers in the study area are aware of differences in students' learning personality, they allow the students to express

their individual potentials through teams and independent project work; encourage them to join groups of their choice such as drama, choir, jet club and sports teams without compulsion. This is in consonance with the report of Diezmann & Watters (2006) that reported that gifted students have an advanced knowledge. Findings on pedagogical skills indicated that teachers assess students' performance through test scores in order to identify their strong talents. This indicates that despite students' levels of talents display, there is no correlation between his/her giftedness and teachers' assessment which is purely based on students' performance in test scores. This could discourage the talented students from aspiring to build on their strong capability since they are not being graded and awarded scores in accordance with their talents. This pattern of pedagogical skill was rejected by Langrehr (2006). He argued that talented students should be assessed on how well they display 'creative-critical thinking.

It was further shown in the study that teachers of secondary schools mostly use motivational strategy to manage students' talents. The motivational strategy used was in form of giving prizes and praises to students with exceptional talents display in order to encourage them. This supports the report of Berger (1989) that gifted students should be given the opportunity to explore their sense of direction. It was also indicated in the study that teachers of schools use independent study as a strategy for managing students' talents which require giving personal project work to students according to their individual capabilities. Few teachers in the study area use creative teaching as a strategy for managing students' talents. This negates the emphasis on the importance of new approaches to instruction that without new approaches to instruction that connect to the needs and learning styles of students, may continue to fail and are likely to drop out of the school system. Clark (2002) affirmed that managing students' talents is an extended job, a role for teachers who are not just subject-matter specialist, but who are engaged more directly in sup-

porting students' personal development, set of shared beliefs about what and how students should learn. The study showed that teachers of secondary schools are facing challenges in managing students' talents. It was identified that students grading pattern form the major challenges faced by teachers in managing secondary school students' talents. This pattern of grading does not respect the uniqueness of each learner and could lead to frustration and loss of interest in the subject taught. The finding supports that of Crocker (2004) which affirmed that gifted children have special learning needs, which if not met, could lead to frustration, loss of self-esteem, boredom, laziness and underachievement. It was further indicated that inadequate resources in both human and materials, student population, time, professional training, student indiscipline among others are challenges faced by teachers in managing students' talents. In consonance with the finding Raywid (1995) affirmed that the prevailing condition of learning environments such as students' population, lesson periods and student indiscipline are some of the challenges faced by teachers in managing students' talents in schools. The findings of the study further indicated that whether teachers have the needed skills to identify and manage students' talents or not, effective and productive students' talents identification and management are dependent on how conducive the school environment is for identification and management of students' diverse talents. Talent is neither identified nor managed in isolation, it is an experimental process that requires proper planning, supportive and enabling environment under the through directives trained professionals.

Conclusion

The study concluded that teachers in the study area had necessary skills such as guidance and counselling, motivational, creative teaching and pedagogical skills needed in identifying students' talents while they lacked strategies such as independent, creative teaching, individualised instruction and pro-

gramme planning in managing students' talents. It was also concluded that among the challenges faced by teachers in managing students' talents are students' population, time, professional training, students' grading pattern and students' indiscipline.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made to boost effective use of teachers' skills in students' talents identification and management in secondary schools: the population of students per class should be reduced to a controllable number as to enable teachers to manage students' talents effectively. Also, teachers should be sent on professional training in students' talents identification and management since they might not have acquired these skills during their years in the college or university while mastering their subjects. Students' talents management should be used as a strategy to reduce indiscipline and moral decadence among secondary school students. To this end uniform, grading pattern of students' abilities should be discouraged.

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