AN INVESTIGATION OF LAGOS STATE PRIMARY TEACHERS' PERCEPTION AND READINESS TOWARDS THE EKO EXCEL PROGRAMME

Mojisola N. Maneul PhD[1], & Abimbola P. Osagie[2]

[1 & 2]Department of Social Science Education, University of Lagos, Akoka Nigeria

Abstract

The study investigated on Lagos State primary school teacher's perception and readiness towards the Eko Excel Programme. Descriptive research design was employed for the study. The population for this study comprises of all primary teachers in the six (6) selected local government education authorities in Lagos State. Multistage sampling procedure was adopted for the study. Through stratified sampling technique, the primary school was separated from the secondary schools in each educational district. Instrument on EKOEXCEL was used for the collection of the data. Reliability of the instrument was done through the use of Cronbach Alpha technique to check the reliability coefficient and the result is yielded r= 0.78. The findings of the study shows that Lagos State primary school teachers were informed about the EKOEXCEL programme before its implementation, Lagos State primary school teachers received special training before the implementation of the EKOEXCEL program and Lagos State primary school teachers believe pupils perform better with the EKOEXCEL program compared to traditional teaching methods. The study recommended that, developers of EKOEXCEL should provide regular and comprehensive technical support to teachers to ensure effective use of the app. Lastly, Ministry of Education should regularly sensitize teachers about technological innovations and ICT through workshops and seminars to enhance their knowledge and skills.

Keywords: EKOEXCEL, Information Technology, Smartphone, Teaching and Learning, Program Implementer

Introduction

Teachers are at the heart of successful meaningful teaching and learning and introduction of new training models to support and empower them will impact pupil and teacher success which is why the EKO EXCEL programme was introduced as a Lagos State government initiative; launched in the latter part of 2019, designed and funded to drive excellence in learning for over 500,000 pupils across all 1,016 public primary schools in Lagos State. The initiative is an education reform of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu's administration in developing more highly skilled teachers in public schools and enhancing Lagos' basic education curriculum. Through EKOEXCEL, over fourteen thousand existing government teachers are being upskilled through re-training and the use of technology that supports and motivates them to succeed in their classrooms' pedagogy.

EKOEXCEL was as a result of the Lagos State Government's desire to maintain its position as a leading African economy. It believes a critical investment in basic education is required to build the quality workforce needed for the nation's growth (Aaronson, Barrow, & Sander, 2007). Most importantly, Lagos is unequivocal in its commitment to equity through ensuring access to quality education for all children. One of its main goals is to support teachers in achieving better learning outcomes in the classroom.

The EKOEXCEL effect was supported by The Education Collaboration Center in partnership with LASG SUBEB, studying the effect of the Lagos State EKOEXCEL

programme. To enhance its processes and ensure that head teachers and teachers maintain the highest standards in delivering education to pupils, Tablets have been provided to primary school teachers. This initiative aims to standardize the learning curriculum across all teachers in the various zones of the state. For teachers who are absent, they can be remotely monitored via a dedicated real-time monitoring control center known as the Situation Room, which has been deployed to all EKOEXCEL schools by New Globe Education Services (Batte, Forster, & Larson, 2003).

The Situation Room is the first of its kind for Government owned schools in Nigeria which further positions the Lagos State Government as a leader in education reforms and while using the Situation room, every school is visible no matter how remote or difficult to reach it is. Completion of the situation room serves as a major milestone to fully cement the EKOEXCEL programme as an integral part of the Lagos State Ministry of Education's major interventions to close learning gaps by increasing learning gains and improving teaching methods Biktimirov, & Armstrong, 2015). This showcases the full potential of EKOEXCEL's digitisation, and transparency. Hence, the Lagos State quality of teaching across primary schools, have made them almost the same.

Carnoy, Khavenson, & Ivanova, (2015) observed that, each teacher is empowered with a mobile tablet preloaded with Lagos state's curriculum and educational materials that will be used during classroom activities. Similarly, leveraging technology will enable teachers and head teachers to be more effective. They are also supported through in-person coaching and ongoing mentorship. A total of 1,016 head teachers will receive personalized one-on-one coaching and support. The quality assurance team will be supported with digital tools which makes learning now uniform all over the state because the same thing is taught all over the state every day. Teachers are given tablets to use, while the head teachers are given smartphones. With these tablets, you can take attendance and lessons are timed on it as well. Through it, advice could be given to teachers on how to go about their lesson plans. Information on exams, attendance, scores, even information on details about their parents is taken on the phone. The smartphone also helps to geo-locate each school (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007).

The EKOEXCEL training is both up-front and on-the-job, throughout the year. A fundamental element is better methodology for teachers. The teachers will become more skillful in helping children to learn in a positive environment. Prior to EKO EXCEL, the teachers had the burden of preparing handwritten lesson notes, which sometimes does not allow uniformity and strict adherence to the curriculum (Entwistle, 2003). However, with the introduction of the initiative, teachers can work within the curriculum as their teacher tablets are preloaded with lessons and content that can be effectively monitored for standardization across all of Lagos' 1,016 public primary schools.

EKO EXCEL keys into different modes of learning so that everyone is carried along. The interesting thing about all these is that the children are being conditioned to think better, study better and see knowledge and education as something to be acquired rather than something to be forced on you. Hence, education is now more interesting and more fun for them as it promotes interaction, and you are also keying in their interest as a teacher. The Lagos State educational board has appointed backend officers who visit schools at least two

or three times a week to observe the teachers. If they see teachers lagging, they mentor them and give those tips on the job (Habibu, Al-Mamun, & Clement, 2012).

Harris, & Sass, (2011) in lieu of this, having identified the movement of the 21st century on technology as it is becoming a panacea to solving recent educational problems and satisfying the needs of the current generation, How prepared are the teachers in welcoming this new development as it is imperative that the Teachers who are the implementors of the designed curriculum are endowed with all the necessary knowledge and skills needed to properly transmit the expected knowledge, beliefs, norms, skills to the learners or coming generations. The educators need to be proactive, innovative and skillful in creating and using 21st century technological tools/gadgets to integrate instructions in the classroom.

There is need for the Teachers in Lagos State, to be exposed to, and be trained on the skillful use of 21st century technology to solving educational problems. With this, vast majority of emerging teachers would be qualified and skilled enough in using the 21st century technology to transmit knowledge, beliefs, ideas and skills to learners in a more convenient way, to meet the needs and aspirations of this technology driven generation (Jackson, Dukerich, & Hestenes, 2008).

Concept of EKO EXCEL in Teaching and Learning Programme

The concept of EKOEXCEL in teaching and learning program is based on the belief that quality education is the foundation of social and economic development, and that all children, regardless of their socio-economic status, should have access to quality education. The program focuses on providing schools with the necessary resources and support to create a conducive learning environment that promotes student engagement and learning (Jimoh, Bamiro, Akapo, Ibrahim, & Ismaila, (2020).

One of the key components of the program is teacher training and professional development. EKO EXCEL provides teachers with regular training sessions on various topics, including pedagogy, classroom management, and subject-specific instruction. The program also offers ongoing support and mentoring for teachers, allowing them to improve their teaching practices and increase student engagement and learning (Kehinde, 2020).

Kehinde, (2020) observed that another important aspect of the programme is infrastructure improvement. EKO EXCEL provides funds for renovation, construction of new classrooms, and installation of basic amenities such as water supply and electricity. This investment in school infrastructure creates a more conducive learning environment for students, improving their overall educational experience.

The programme also prioritizes the provision of instructional materials, including textbooks, workbooks, and other educational resources, to public primary schools across Lagos State. This ensures that students have access to the necessary resources to support their learning, regardless of their family's financial situation (Mailizar, & Fan, 2019).

A stakeholder analysis of the Eko Excel program can provide valuable insights into the program's implementation and help identify key stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities. The following is a stakeholder analysis of the EKOEXCEL program:

Government: The Lagos State government is a key stakeholder in the EKOEXCEL program. The government is responsible for providing funding for the program, setting policies, and overseeing program implementation.

Program Implementers: The program implementers, which include the EKOEXCEL team and their partners, are responsible for designing and implementing the program, providing technical support to schools, and monitoring program progress and impact.

School Administrators: School administrators, including principals and head teachers, are responsible for overseeing the implementation of the program in their schools, ensuring that teachers and students are following program guidelines and utilizing program resources, and reporting on program progress and outcomes.

Teachers: Teachers are responsible for implementing the program in the classroom, utilizing program resources and materials, attending training sessions, and providing feedback on the program's effectiveness.

Parents: Parents are also stakeholders in the Eko Excel program. They are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly, supporting their children's learning at home, and providing feedback on the programme's impact on their children's education.

Students: Students are also important stakeholders in the Eko Excel program. They are responsible for attending school regularly, engaging in the learning process, and utilizing program resources and materials.

Donors and Partners: Donors and partners, including international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private companies, are important stakeholders in the Eko Excel program. They provide funding, technical support, and other resources to support program implementation and expansion.

By identifying the key stakeholders involved in the EKOEXCEL program and their roles and responsibilities, program implementers can better understand the needs and expectations of stakeholders and tailor program activities to meet their needs (Muralidharan, & Sundararaman, 2010). Stakeholder engagement and communication are critical to the success of the program, and program implementers must work closely with all stakeholders to ensure that the program is meeting its objectives and improving education outcomes in Lagos State.

The concept of EKOEXCEL in teaching and learning program is based on the belief that quality education is a fundamental right of every child and that targeted support in the areas of teacher training and professional development, infrastructure improvement, and instructional materials provision can significantly improve the quality of education in public primary schools across Lagos State (Muralidharan, & Sundararaman, 2011)

Approach of EKOEXCEL to Improving Teachers and Child's Education

Eko Excel has demonstrated excellence in improving teacher and child education in Lagos State public primary schools through its multifaceted approach to education reform. The program's focus on teacher training, professional development, infrastructure improvement, and instructional materials provision that has led to significant improvements in learning outcomes, enrollment rates, and retention rates, especially in schools with the highest levels of program implementation.

One of the key components of EKOEXCEL's approach to improving teacher education is its teacher training and professional development program. The program provides teachers with regular training sessions on various topics, including pedagogy, classroom management, and subject-specific instruction (Navarro, Zervas, Gesa, & Sampson,

2016). The program also offers ongoing support and mentoring for teachers, allowing them to improve their teaching practices and increase student engagement and learning.

In addition to teacher training, EKOEXCEL has also prioritized infrastructure improvement in public primary schools across Lagos State. The program has provided schools with funds for renovation, construction of new classrooms, and installation of basic amenities such as water supply and electricity (Noah, & Olusola, 2015). This investment in school infrastructure has created a more conducive learning environment for students, improving their overall educational experience.

According Osuala, (2010) EKOEXCEL has also prioritized the provision of instructional materials, including textbooks, workbooks, and other educational resources, to public primary schools across Lagos State. This has ensured that students have access to the necessary resources to support their learning, regardless of their family's financial situation.
EKOEXCEL's multifaceted approach to education reform, which includes teacher training professional development, infrastructure improvement, and instructional materials provision, has led to significant improvements in teacher and child education in Lagos State public primary schools (Putwain, Sander, & Larkin, (2013). The program has demonstrated excellence in its approach to education reform, with tangible results in the form of improved learning outcomes, increased enrollment rates, and higher retention rates.

Statement of the Problem

The Eko Excel programme came as a detour from the traditional way of teaching, yielding to the use of technology via guided supported learning for teaching and learning by primary school teachers in Lagos State. Its purpose is to ensure uniformity in teaching across all Lagos State primary schools and among all Lagos State primary school teachers. Additionally, it aims to cultivate highly skilled, technologically trained teachers and improve learning outcomes for pupils. While the program is good and progressive, it seems that teachers' preparedness and receptivity, particularly in terms of training and readiness, were not adequately considered before its implementation. According to Edward Thorndike, readiness is everything as readiness can make or mar the success of a programme. Seeing however, that the implementers of this programme are teachers, it is therefore argued that the aforementioned study, seeks to examine the Lagos State primary teachers' attitude and perception of the Eko Excel Programme with the end result of documenting teachers ration of the programme.

Purpose of the study

The objectives of the study specifically are to:

1. determine if Lagos State primary school teachers were informed about the EKOEXCEL programme before its implementation.
2. assess whether teachers received any special training prior to the implementation of the EKOEXCEL programme.
3. investigate the challenges faced during the implementation of the EKOEXCEL programme.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study;

1. Were Lagos State primary school teachers informed about the EKOEXCEL programme before its implementation?
2. Did Lagos State primary school teachers receive any special training before the implementation of the EKOEXCEL programme?
3. Investigate the challenges faced during the implementation of the EKOEXCEL programme.

Methodology

Descriptive research design was employed for the study. The population for this study comprises of all primary teachers in the six (6) selected local government education authorities in Lagos State. Multistage sampling procedure was adopted for the study. Through stratified sampling technique, the primary schools were separated from the secondary schools in each educational district. Fifteen (15) primary schools were selected each from all the selected local government education authorities in Lagos State making 90 primary schools. Similarly, the simple random sampling technique was used to select five primary school teachers from each of the selected local government education authorities in Lagos state. Ninety (90) schools were used and a total of four hundred and fifty (450) primary school teachers were taken part in this study. Questionnaire on EKOEXCEL was used for the collection of the data. Reliability of the instrument was done through the use of Cronbach Alpha technique to check the reliability coefficient and the result yielded r= 0.78. Data analysis was done with descriptive statistic of mean and standard deviation.

Results

Research Question One

Were Lagos state primary school teachers informed about the EKOEXCEL programme before its implementation?

Table 1

Lagos state Primary teachers were aware of EkoExcel programme before implementation

S/N	Items	Yes	No	Total	Remarks
1	I heard about the EkoExcel programme through my school ahead.	345 76.7%	105 23.3%	450 100%	Yes
2	I was told directly a few days to the training about the EkoExcel programme.	280 62.2%	170 37.8%	450 100%	Yes
3	I was not informed at all about the training	205 45.6%	245 54.4%	450 100%	No
4	I was just told to attend a training for it	320 71.1%	130 28.9%	450 100%	Yes
5	I was duly informed well ahead of time.	360 80.0%	90 20.0%	450 100%	Yes

	Grand Total	**1,510**	**740**	**2,250**	**Yes**
		67.1%	**32.9%**	**100%**	

Table 1 above shows the analysis of items 1 to 5 shows that 1,510 respondents (67.1%) answered "Yes," indicating that Lagos State primary school teachers were informed about the EKOEXCEL program before its implementation, while 740 respondents (32.9%) answered "No."

Research Question Two

Did Lagos State primary school teachers receive any special training before the implementation of the EKOEXCEL programme?

Table 7

Lagos State Primary Teachers were given Special Training before the Implementation of the EKOEXCEL Programme.

S/N	Items	Yes	No	Total	Remarks
6	I received onsite workshop trainings about the EKOEXCEL programme.	360 80.0%	90 20.0%	450 100%	Yes
7	I received online workshop trainings about the EKOEXCEL programme.	255 56.7%	195 43.3%	450 100%	Yes
8	The training covered all other aspects of the programme.	290 64.4%	160 35.6%	450 100%	Yes
9	The training did not cover all other aspects of the programme.	240 53.3%	210 46.7%	450 100%	Yes
10	The trainings enhanced the teachers' performance and the academic performance of the students.	325 72.2%	125 27.8%	450 100%	Yes
	Grand Total	**1,470** **65.3%**	**780** **34.7%**	**2,250** **100%**	**Yes**

Table 2 affirm that, the analysis of items 6 to 10 shows that 1,470 respondents (65.3%) answered "Yes," indicating that Lagos State primary school teachers received special training

before the implementation of the EKOEXCEL program, while 780 respondents (34.7%) answered "No."

Research Question Three

Do Lagos State primary school teachers believe that pupils perform better with the EKOEXCEL programme compared to traditional teaching methods?

Table 8

Lagos State Primary Teachers Still Prefer the Traditional Way of Teaching.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Remark
11	The traditional way of teaching is still better for teachers.	110 24.4%	175 38.9%	60 13.3%	105 23.3%	450 100%	Agreed
12	The traditional way of teaching should be combined with the EKOEXCEL tablet for effective teaching.	175 38.9%	235 52.2%	30 6.7%	10 2.2%	450 100%	Agreed
13	The EKOEXCEL programme is too cumbersome and time consuming for teachers.	130 28.9%	260 57.8%	55 12.2%	5 1.1%	450 100%	Agreed
14	The EKOEXCEL programme should be strictly adhered to.	85 18.9%	170 37.8%	140 31.1%	55 12.2%	450 100%	Agreed
15	The EKOEXCEL programme still requires a lot of improvement to make it effective.	220 51.1%	230 48.9%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	450 100%	Agreed
	Grand Total	**720** **32.0%**	**1,070** **47.6%**	**285** **12.7%**	**175** **7.8%**	**2,250** **100%**	**Agreed**

From Table 8 above, the analysis of items 11 to 15 shows that 1,790 respondents (79.6%) agreed that Lagos State primary school teachers believe pupils perform better with the EKOEXCEL program compared to traditional teaching methods, while 460 respondents (20.4%) disagreed.

Discussion of findings

This study surveys the utilization of EKOEXCEL hand held technology in public primary schools in Lagos State. The findings are discussed in relation to the research questions that guided the study:

The first research question revealed that Lagos State primary school teachers were informed about the EKOEXCEL program before its implementation. This indicates that the teachers were adequately notified and trained on the EKOEXCEL program prior to its rollout. Consequently, the study suggests that Lagos State primary school teachers have enhanced

their competency, skills, and knowledge. This finding aligns with the view of Jimoh, Bamiro, Akapo, Ibrahim, and Ismail (2020), who found that the use of ICT facilities in education positively correlates with perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use among teachers.

The findings related to the second research question revealed that Lagos State primary school teachers received special training before the implementation of the EKOEXCEL program. This suggests that the teachers participated in both on-site and online workshops focused on the EKOEXCEL program. As a result, these training enhanced the teachers' performance and positively impacted the academic performance of the pupils. Additionally, the training covered all relevant aspects of the EKOEXCEL program. This finding aligns with the perspective of Sanchez, Marcos, Gonzalez, and Guanlin (2012), who noted that while teachers generally have a positive attitude towards ICT, its use in the classroom remains limited and is often tied to innovative processes.

The findings from the third research question revealed that Lagos State primary school teachers believe pupils perform better with the EKOEXCEL program compared to traditional teaching methods. However, this suggests that while the EKOEXCEL program has its advantages, the traditional teaching methods are still valued by teachers. The implication is that a combination of traditional teaching methods and the EKOEXCEL tablet could result in more effective teaching. Therefore, the EKOEXCEL program still requires significant improvements to enhance its effectiveness fully. This finding aligns with the view of Milizar and Fan (2019) regarding Indonesian teachers' knowledge of ICT and its use in secondary mathematics teaching. Their study found that Indonesian secondary mathematics teachers generally have inadequate knowledge of ICT and its application in teaching.

Conclusion

This study concluded that the implementation of the EKOEXCEL program in Lagos State primary schools has had mixed results. The introduction of EKOEXCEL has led to improvements in classroom management, such as better attendance tracking and easier classroom control for teachers. Additionally, the study found that teachers generally have a positive attitude towards the initiative and are willing to integrate the app into their teaching practices. The use of technology in the classroom has fostered a strong positive relationship between teachers and students, enhancing analytical thinking and broadening their worldviews, which has led to positive learning outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. The developers of EKOEXCEL should provide regular and comprehensive technical support to teachers to ensure effective use of the app.
2. The Ministry of Education should regularly sensitize teachers about technological innovations and ICT through workshops and seminars to enhance their knowledge and skills.
3. There should be ongoing assessments of the EKOEXCEL program to improve its viability and sustainability, ensuring that it continues to meet the needs of both teachers and students effectively.

References

Aaronson, D., Barrow, L., & Sander, W. (2007). Teachers and student achievement in the Chicago public high schools. *Journal of Labor Economics, 25*(1), 95-135.

Baker, M. (n.d.). Civilizational analysis, European modernity and western education: A modern/colonial world system perspective. *[Publication details incomplete]*

Batte, M. T., Forster, D. L., & Larson, D. W. (2003). Teaching methods: An assessment of student acceptance and performance in distance education with two-way interactive compressed video. *Review of Agricultural Economics, 25*(2), 524-539.

Biktimirov, E. N., & Armstrong, M. J. (2015). Is the second time the charm for students repeating introductory finance? *Journal of Financial Education, 41*(1), 32-49.

Carnoy, M., Khavenson, T., & Ivanova, A. (2015). Using TIMSS and PISA results to inform educational policy: A study of Russia and its neighbours. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education, 45*(2), 248-271.

Clotfelter, C. T., Ladd, H. F., & Vigdor, J. L. (2007). Teacher credentials and student achievement: Longitudinal analysis with student fixed effects. *Economics of Education Review, 26*(6), 673-682.

Entwistle, N. (2003). *Promoting deep learning through teaching and assessment: Conceptual frameworks and educational contexts*. *[Publication details incomplete]*

Habibu, T., Al-Mamun, A., & Clement, C. (2012). Difficulties faced by teachers in using ICT in teaching-learning at technical and higher educational institutions in Uganda. *International Journal of Engineering Research & Technology, 1*(7). *[Page numbers needed]*

Harris, D. N., & Sass, T. R. (2011). Teacher training, teacher quality and student achievement. *Journal of Public Economics, 95*(7-8), 798-812.

Jackson, J., Dukerich, L., & Hestenes, D. (2008). Modeling instruction: An effective model for science education. *Science Educator, 17*(1), 10-17.

Jimoh, A. S., Bamiro, N. B., Akapo, T. A., Ibrahim, D. A., & Ismaila, M. A. (2020). Survey determinants of the utilization of ICT facilities for instruction in Lagos state secondary schools. *Al-Hikmah Journal of Education, 7*(2), 42-53.

Kehinde, A. (2020). *The speech delivered at the Lagos State Government's EKO EXCEL training event: "EKO EXCEL" and the future of public education in Lagos*. *[Publication details incomplete]*

Mailizar, M., & Fan, L. (2019). Indonesian teachers' knowledge of ICT and the use of ICT in secondary mathematics teaching. *EURASIA Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education, 16*(1). *[Page numbers needed]*

Muralidharan, K., & Sundararaman, V. (2010). The impact of diagnostic feedback to teachers on student learning: Experimental evidence from India. *The Economic Journal, 120*(546), F187-F203.

Muralidharan, K., & Sundararaman, V. (2011). Teacher performance pay: Experimental evidence from India. *Journal of Political Economy, 119*(1), 39-77.

Navarro, S., Zervas, P., Gesa, R., & Sampson, D. (2016). Developing teachers' competences for designing inclusive learning experiences. *Educational Technology and Society, 19*(1), 17-27.

Noah, L. S., & Olusola, O. A. (2015). Impacts of pedagogical agent gender in an accessible learning environment. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society, 18*(4), 401-411.

Osuala, I. (2010). *Time international, Lagos: New technology discoveries in Nigeria industries*. Lagos: Edland Publishers.

PM News Nigeria. (2019, December 9). Eko Excel: Lagos begins training of 2400 primary school teachers. Retrieved from https://www.pmnewsnigeria.com/2019/12/09/eko-excel-lagos-begins-training-of-2400-primary-school-teachers/

Putwain, D., Sander, P., & Larkin, D. (2013). Academic self-efficacy in study-related skills and behaviours: Relations with learning-related emotions and academic success. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 83*(4), 633-650.

ThisDay Live. (2020, January 29). EkoExcel: Restoring confidence in Lagos public schools. Retrieved from https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/01/29/ekoexcel-restoring-confidence-in-lagos-public-schools