TEACHING METHODS IN SOME SELECT SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN YOLA: A BEHAVIORIST OR MENTALIST APPROACH?

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ABSTRACT
This study investigates the dominant teaching approach employed in some select secondary schools in Yola, Adamawa State. In geographical context, previous studies have predominantly concentrated on southern Nigerian states, leaving a significant gap in research concerning northern regions like Adamawa. This study addresses this geographical oversight by focusing specifically on Yola, thereby contributing new insights into the educational practices in a less-studied area. Based on the framework of teaching methodologies, a questionnaire-based survey was administered to sample 50 teachers from four randomly selected secondary schools, two each from Yola North and South Local Government Areas of Adamawa State. The findings reveal that a majority of teachers (58%) utilize a combination of both behaviorist and mentalist approaches, while 42% rely primarily on the behaviorist approach, characterized by teacher-centered instruction and reinforcement strategies. No teachers identified as using purely mentalist methods. The results also show that teachers' choices are influenced by practical classroom management concerns, fostering critical thinking, and addressing students' individual learning needs. The study highlights the importance of teacher training, with 92% of respondents considering it crucial for informing their teaching practices.

Introduction

The teaching methods employed in secondary schools significantly impact students' learning outcomes and educational experiences. In Nigeria, the debate surrounding the most effective teaching approach continues, with behaviorist and mentalist theories being two dominant perspectives. This study investigates the prevalence of behaviorist and mentalist teaching approaches in Nigerian secondary schools, specifically in Yola, Adamawa State. Behaviorist theory, rooted in the works of Skinner (1953) and Thorndike (1913), emphasizes teacher-centered instruction, rote memorization, and reinforcement. In contrast, mentalist theory, influenced by Piaget (1952) and Vygotsky (1978), focuses on student-centered learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. These theoretical frameworks have implications for teaching practices, with behaviorist approaches prioritizing knowledge transmission and mentalist approaches emphasizing cognitive development.

Research has shown that teaching methods significantly influence student engagement, motivation, and academic achievement (Hativa, 2013; Khan, 2016). In Nigerian secondary schools, studies have highlighted the dominance of behaviorist approaches, characterized by teacher-centered instruction and rote memorization (Adeyemi, 2018; Ololubo, 2020). However, mentalist approaches have been advocated for, as they promote critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills essential for the 21st-century learner (Afolabi, 2020; Okebukola, 2015). This study aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice by examining the teaching methods employed in some select secondary schools in Yola. Using a questionnaire-based survey, this research investigates the prevalence of behaviorist and mentalist approaches, factors influencing teachers' pedagogical choices, and the perceived effectiveness of these approaches.

The teaching methods employed in Nigerian secondary schools, particularly in northern states like Adamawa, remain understudied, with a dominance of behaviorist approaches neglecting critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Despite the advocacy for mentalist approaches emphasizing student-centered learning, their adoption and effectiveness remain unclear. Existing studies have focused primarily on southern Nigerian states, leaving a geographical gap. This study aims to fill these gaps by investigating the prevalence and effectiveness of behaviorist and mentalist approaches in selected secondary schools in Yola, Adamawa State, using a questionnaire-based survey. By addressing the research objectives, this study will provide insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders, informing teacher training programs, curriculum development, and educational policy reforms to enhance student learning outcomes and promote effective teaching practices, ultimately bridging the gap between theory and practice in Nigerian secondary education.

1.1 Conceptual Clarification: Teaching Approaches in Nigerian Secondary Education

This study explores two predominant teaching approaches—behaviorist and mentalist—within the context of Nigerian secondary education. Behaviorist approaches, rooted in the theories of B.F. Skinner, emphasize observable behaviors and the role of reinforcement in learning, often resulting in teacher-centered instruction characterized by rote memorization and passive learning. In contrast, mentalist approaches, informed by cognitive theories from scholars like Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, focus on internal mental processes, promoting active learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

The conceptual framework of this research underscores the necessity of integrating these approaches to create a balanced pedagogical environment. By recognizing the strengths and limitations of both behaviorist and mentalist strategies, educators can foster a more holistic learning experience that not only imparts knowledge but also cultivates essential cognitive skills. This study advocates for a shift towards student-centered learning, emphasizing the importance of teacher training and curriculum reform to enhance educational outcomes in Nigerian secondary schools. Ultimately, this conceptual clarification serves as a foundation for understanding the complexities of teaching methodologies and their impact on student engagement and learning in the 21st century.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to investigate the prevalence of behaviorist and mentalist teaching approaches among secondary school teachers in Yola, Adamawa State. The methodology was structured to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the teaching practices in the selected schools. The sample size for this study consisted of 50 secondary school teachers, selected through a convenient sampling technique. This method was chosen due to its practicality and efficiency in accessing participants who were readily available and willing to participate in the study. The selection criteria included teachers from various subjects and grade levels to ensure a diverse representation of teaching experiences and methodologies. A structured questionnaire was developed to collect data on demographic characteristics, teaching approaches, and the perceived effectiveness of these methods. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions, allowing for quantitative analysis as well as qualitative insights into teachers' pedagogical choices.

The questionnaire was distributed to participants via Google Forms, ensuring ease of access and anonymity. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided with informed consent before completing the questionnaire. This approach facilitated a higher response rate and allowed for the collection of data in a confidential manner. Data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically frequencies and percentages, to identify patterns and trends in the teaching methods employed by the respondents. The analysis aimed to highlight the prevalence of behaviorist and mentalist approaches, as well as the factors influencing teachers' pedagogical choices. Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. Participants were assured of their confidentiality and anonymity, and their participation was entirely voluntary. Informed consent was obtained prior to data collection, ensuring that respondents were fully aware of their rights and the study's objectives. This methodology provides a robust framework for understanding the teaching approaches utilized in Nigerian secondary schools, contributing valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in the education sector.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in two major theoretical frameworks: Behaviorist Theory and Mentalist Theory. The Behaviorist Theory, developed by Skinner (1953) and Thorndike (1913), posits that learning occurs through reinforcement, punishment, and repetition. In contrast, the Mentalist Theory, influenced by Piaget (1952) and Vygotsky (1978), emphasizes cognitive development, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Behaviorist Theory will be applied to analyze teaching methods that focus on teacher-centered instruction, rote memorization, and reinforcement. This framework will help examine how teachers use rewards, punishments, and repetition to control student behavior and learning outcomes.

Mentalist Theory will be used to analyze teaching methods that emphasize student-centered learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. This framework will help examine how teachers encourage active learning, cognitive development, and student autonomy. To analyze the research findings, this study will employ a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaire will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to identify patterns and correlations between teaching methods and student learning outcomes. Multiple-choice questions will be analyzed using thematic analysis to provide deeper insights into teachers' pedagogical choices and perceived effectiveness of teaching approaches. By integrating these theoretical frameworks, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of teaching methods in Nigerian secondary schools, informing evidence-based practices and policy reforms. Teaching methods in Nigerian secondary schools have been a subject of debate, with behaviorist and mentalist approaches being two dominant perspectives. This literature review examines the theoretical underpinnings of both approaches, reviews recent studies, and identifies gaps in existing literature. The reviews will sensitize insights from these two frameworks, behaviorist and mentalist approaches, in order to have a nuanced understanding of the current state of knowledge.

3.1 Behaviorist Theory

B.F. Skinner's behaviorist theory, developed in the 1950s and 1960s, posits that behavior is

determined by its consequences, such as rewards or punishments (Skinner, 1953). Skinner's operant conditioning theory emphasizes the role of environmental factors in shaping behavior. He argued that behavior can be modified through reinforcement, punishment, and extinction. Skinner's operant conditioning theory consists of three main components: reinforcement, punishment, and extinction. Reinforcement increases desired behavior, punishment decreases undesired behavior, and extinction eliminates undesired behavior by ignoring it (Skinner, 1953). For instance, a teacher rewarding a student for completing homework reinforces positive behaviour.

Recent studies in Nigeria have investigated the dominance of behaviorist approaches in secondary schools. Adeyemi (2018) found that the behaviorist approach prevails in "Teaching methods and students' academic performance in Nigerian secondary schools," highlighting its widespread use. Ololubo (2020) revealed that this approach neglects critical thinking skills in "Teaching methods and students' learning outcomes in Nigerian secondary schools," emphasizing its limitations. Eze (2020) identified teachers' inadequate training as a significant barrier to shifting from behaviorist to mentalist approaches in "Challenges of implementing student-centered learning in Nigerian secondary schools." Nwazor (2019) underscored the need for teacher training and professional development to adopt mentalist methods in "Teacher training and professional development in Nigeria." Alqahtani (2022) found that 60% of teachers used Behaviorist methods, such as reinforcement and punishment, to enhance student engagement. Kumar et al. (2019) discovered that Behaviorist approaches improved student achievement, but noted limitations, including overreliance on extrinsic motivation.

In contrast, research advocates for the mentalist approach, emphasizing its benefits. Okebukola (2015) demonstrated that mentalist methods enhance critical thinking skills in "Rethinking teaching and learning in Nigerian schools," strongly advocating for this approach. These findings collectively highlight the challenges and opportunities in Nigerian secondary education, underscoring the need for pedagogical transformation. By addressing teacher training gaps and adopting mentalist approaches, educators can foster engaging, motivating, and cognitively stimulating learning environments. This shift has the potential to enhance student outcomes, particularly in critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

3.2 Mentalist Theory

Mentalist theory, also known as cognitive theory, focuses on internal mental processes that influence learning and behaviour. This approach, developed by cognitive psychologists such as Jean Piaget (19520, and Vygotsky (1978), emphasizes the role of thoughts, feelings, and perceptions in shaping human behaviour. Mentalist theory informs teaching methods that promote active learning, encouraging students to engage with material.

It also fosters critical thinking, developing problem-solving and analytical skills. Recent studies underscore the benefits of the mentalist approach in teaching and learning. Afolabi (2020) found that this approach enhances student engagement in "Mentalist approach to teaching and learning in Nigerian schools." Khan (2016) revealed that it fosters deeper understanding compared to behaviorist methods in "Comparative study of behaviorist and mentalist approaches to teaching." Hativa (2013) demonstrated that mentalist approaches increase student motivation in the impact of teaching methods on student engagement and motivation.

Similarly, Okebukola (2015) advocated for the mentalist approach, highlighting its ability to enhance critical thinking skills in "Rethinking teaching and learning in Nigerian schools." Yusuf (2020) showed that mentalist methods improve mathematics performance in "Effectiveness of mentalist approach in teaching mathematics." Liu et al. (2022) reported that 40% of teachers utilized Mentalist methods, such as cognitive load theory, to optimize learning outcomes. Hmelo-Silver (2017) found that Mentalist approaches fostered deeper understanding, critical thinking, and collaboration.These findings collectively emphasize the advantages of mentalist teaching methods in promoting effective learning. By shifting from behaviorist to mentalist methods, educators can create engaging, motivating, and cognitively stimulating learning environments. This pedagogical transformation has the potential to enhance student outcomes, particularly in critical thinking and problem-solving skills. As research continues to validate the mentalist approach, educators and policymakers are urged

to reconsider teaching practices and prioritize student-centered learning.

Kirschner et al. (2022) revealed that 30% of teachers integrated Behaviorist and Mentalist principles, balancing guidance and autonomy. Bandura et al. (2018) demonstrated the effectiveness of combined approaches in enhancing student motivation and self-efficacy. These studies indicate that teachers often employ a mix of Behaviorist and Mentalist approaches, reflecting the complexity of teaching and learning. While existing studies provide insights into behaviorist and mentalist approaches, gaps remai limited geographical focus on southern Nigerian states, scarcity of research on northern Nigerian states, particularly Adamawa, and lack of empirical studies on teaching methods in Yola. Therefore, this study addresses these gaps by investigating teaching methods in selected secondary schools in Yola, Adamawa State, using a questionnaire-based survey.

4.0 Data Presentation

The data analysis for this study was conducted using descriptive statistics to examine the teaching approaches among secondary school teachers in Yola, Adamawa State. The responses from 50 teachers were collected through a questionnaire and the data was analyzed to identify patterns and trends in teaching methods, as well as the factors influencing pedagogical choices. Frequency distributions and percentages were used to summarize the findings, offering insights into teachers' experiences, preferences, and the perceived effectiveness of their teaching strategies.

The respondents' teaching experience levels are fairly distributed. Two experience ranges tie for the highest proportion: 26.5% (13 respondents) have 11-15 years of experience, and 26.5% (13 respondents) have 16 years or more. Newer teachers make up 28.6% (14 respondents) with 1-5 years of experience. The remaining 18.4% (9 respondents) have 6-10 years of teaching experience. The highest educational qualifications of the 50 respondents reveal a predominantly undergraduate-educated group. A significant majority (62%) hold an HND or Bachelor's degree, while 30% possess an NCE or ND qualification. Postgraduate qualifications are less prevalent, with 6% holding a Master's degree and a sole respondent (2%) holding a Ph.D. These findings suggest that the majority of respondents have completed undergraduate studies, with limited representation of advanced degree holders.

The teaching approaches employed by the 50 respondents reveal a strong inclination towards eclectic teaching methods. A majority of 58% (29 respondents) reported using a combination of approaches, suggesting adaptability and flexibility in their teaching practices. Meanwhile, 42% (21 respondents) primarily utilize the Behaviorist approach, emphasizing observable behaviors and measurable outcomes. Notably, no respondents identified with the Mentalist approach, which focuses on internal mental processes, and none expressed uncertainty about their teaching approach. The reasons behind the preferred teaching approach among the 50 respondents reveal a focus on practical and student-centered considerations. The majority (42%) chose their approach to create an effective classroom management system, emphasizing the importance of a structured learning environment. Meanwhile, 28% opted for their approach to foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills, highlighting the value of developing students' analytical abilities. Addressing individual learning needs (22%) and preparing students for assessments and evaluations (8%) were also cited as key motivations. The frequency of encouraging student participation in class discussions among the 50 respondents reveals a strong commitment to interactive learning. An overwhelming majority (84%, 42 respondents) reported always encouraging student participation, emphasizing the importance of active engagement in the learning process. Additionally, 14% (7 respondents) often encourage participation, while only 2% (1 respondent) rarely do so. Notably, no respondents indicated never encouraging student participation.

The primary goals of teaching among the 50 respondents reveal a strong emphasis on knowledge transmission. A majority of 68% (34 respondents) prioritize transmitting knowledge to students, highlighting the importance of subject matter expertise. Meanwhile, 20% (10 respondents) focus on developing critical thinking skills, recognizing the value of analytical abilities. Student engagement (10%, 5 respondents) and examination preparation (2%, 1 respondent) are secondary priorities. The teaching methods frequently used by the 50 respondents reveal a strong emphasis on

collaborative learning. Group discussions top the list, with 60% (30 respondents) utilizing this method to encourage active engagement and peer interaction. Textbook-based instruction follows, with 22% (11 respondents) relying on traditional textbook materials. Lecture-based instruction is used by 12% (6 respondents), while project-based learning is employed by a smaller proportion, 6% (3 respondents). The processing speed of students, as reported by 50 respondents indicates a majority (62%, 31 respondents) process information moderately. This suggests that most students require a balanced pace to absorb and understand new information. Meanwhile, 28% (14 respondents) process information very quickly, indicating a subset of rapid learners. A smaller proportion 10% (5 respondents) processes information slowly and potentially requiring additional support or accommodations.

The frequency of assessing student learning, as reported by 50 respondents, reveals a tied majority (48%, 24 respondents each) assessing daily and weekly. This indicates a strong emphasis on regular, frequent evaluations to monitor student progress. A minimal proportion assess student learning less frequently, with 2% (1 respondent) doing so end-of-term and 2% (1 respondent) monthly. The primary assessment types used by 50 respondents reveal a preference for written evaluations. Essay questions (44%, 22 respondents) and multiple-choice tests (40%, 20 respondents) dominate, indicating a focus on written assessments to gauge student understanding. Oral presentations (10%, 5 respondents) and project evaluations (6%, 3 respondents) are used less frequently. The curriculum design significantly impacts teaching approaches, according to 50 respondents. A majority (55%, 28 respondents) find it very influential, suggesting that curriculum structure and content substantially shape their teaching methods. Additionally, 30% (15 respondents) consider it somewhat influential. A minority, 12% (6 respondents) and 2% (1 respondent), find it not very influential or not at all influential, respectively.

Teacher training plays a vital role in shaping teaching approaches, according to 50 respondents. An overwhelming majority (92%, 46 respondents) consider teacher training very important, emphasizing its significance in informing and refining teaching methods. A small minority (8%, 4 respondents) find it somewhat important. Notably, no respondents deemed teacher training not very important or not at all important. Feedback on teaching methods is frequently received by the majority of respondents. A substantial 68% (34 respondents) receive feedback regularly, indicating ongoing evaluation and improvement of teaching practices. Additionally, 26% (13 respondents) receive feedback occasionally. A small minority, 6% (3 respondents), receive feedback rarely. Notably, none of the respondents reported never receiving feedback. The respondents expressed high confidence in their teaching approach effectiveness. An overwhelming 82% (41 respondents) consider their approach very effective in promoting student learning. Additionally, 16% (8 respondents) find it somewhat effective. Only 2% (1 respondent) deemed their approach not very effective.

The respondents expressed high satisfaction with their current teaching approach. A substantial 86% (43 respondents) reported being very satisfied, indicating strong confidence in their teaching methods. Additionally, 12% (6 respondents) were somewhat satisfied. Only 2% (1 respondent) expressed dissatisfaction, stating they were not very satisfied. Notably, none of the respondents reported being not at all satisfied. The respondents showed a divided stance on considering changes to their teaching approach. A slight plurality, 42% (21 respondents), indicated openness to change, potentially seeking new methods or innovations. Meanwhile, 38% (19 respondents) expressed no intention to change, suggesting satisfaction with their current methods. The remaining 20% (10 respondents) were undecided, possibly awaiting new information or inspiration. The primary factor influencing respondents' decisions to change their teaching approach is student performance, cited by 60% (30 respondents). This suggests that teachers prioritize student outcomes and adjust their methods accordingly. Curriculum considerations and teacher training tied for second, each influencing 16% (8 respondents) of the decisions. Administrative policies had the least impact, influencing 8% (4 respondents) of the decisions.

5. Discussion of Finding

The findings from the study provide a comprehensive overview of the teaching practices, preferences, and perceptions of secondary school teachers in Yola, Adamawa State.

5.1 Teaching Approaches:

Eclectic and Behaviorist Methods: The study reveals that a significant majority (58%) of teachers employ eclectic teaching methods, indicating a blend of various pedagogical strategies. This adaptability is crucial in addressing the diverse learning needs of students. However, 42% primarily utilize behaviorist approaches, which focus on observable behaviors and measurable outcomes. The absence of mentalist approaches, which emphasize internal cognitive processes, suggests a potential gap in fostering critical thinking and deeper understanding among students.

5.2 Influence of Curriculum and Teacher Training

Curriculum Design: A majority of respondents (55%) find the curriculum design very influential in shaping their teaching methods. This highlights the importance of a well-structured curriculum that aligns with educational goals and teaching strategies. The findings suggest that teachers may feel constrained by the curriculum, which could limit their ability to innovate or adapt their teaching methods to better suit their students' needs.

Significance of Teacher Training: An overwhelming 92% of respondents consider teacher training very important. This underscores the necessity for ongoing professional development to equip teachers with the skills and knowledge needed to implement effective teaching strategies. However, the study does not provide details on the content or effectiveness of the training received, which is critical for understanding its impact on teaching practices.

5.3. Assessment Methods

Preference for Written Evaluations: The data indicates a strong preference for written assessments, with 44% favoring essay questions and 40% opting for multiple-choice tests. This reliance on traditional assessment methods may limit the evaluation of higher-order thinking skills and collaborative abilities. It raises concerns about whether these assessments adequately reflect student learning and understanding, as they may encourage rote memorization rather than critical analysis.

5. 4. Feedback Mechanisms

Regular Feedback: A substantial 68% of respondents receive feedback regularly, which is essential for continuous improvement in teaching practices. However, the nature and quality of this feedback are not specified, leaving questions about its effectiveness in promoting teacher development. Constructive feedback is vital for helping teachers refine their methods and enhance student learning outcomes.

5.5. Student Engagement and Participation

Encouragement of Participation: The high percentage (84%) of teachers who encourage student participation reflects a commitment to interactive learning. This is a positive finding, as active engagement is crucial for effective learning. However, the methods used to facilitate participation are not detailed, which could impact the inclusivity of these practices. Ensuring that all students, including those who may be less vocal, have opportunities to engage is essential for fostering a supportive learning environment.

5.6. Openness to Change

Divided Stance on Change: The findings show a slight plurality (42%) of teachers is open to changing their teaching methods, while 38% express no intention to change. This division indicates a potential resistance to new pedagogical ideas among a significant portion of the teaching staff. Encouraging a culture of innovation and experimentation in teaching practices is crucial for adapting to the evolving educational landscape.

5.7. Factors Influencing Teaching Decisions

Student Performance as a Priority: The primary factor influencing teaching methods is student performance, cited by 60% of respondents. This focus on outcomes is important, but it may lead to a reactive approach to teaching, where methods are adjusted primarily in response to assessment results rather than proactive engagement with pedagogical innovations. This could stifle creativity and limit the exploration of diverse teaching strategies.

Further Discussion

6 Further Discussion of Results

The discussion of the results from the study on teaching methods in secondary schools in Yola can be enriched by comparing the findings

with existing literature on teaching approaches, particularly in the context of Nigerian education. The study found that 84% of respondents always encourage student participation in class discussions, indicating a strong commitment to interactive learning. This aligns with Hativa (2013) and Khan (2016), who emphasize that interactive teaching methods significantly enhance student engagement and motivation. The findings suggest that teachers in Yola are increasingly recognizing the importance of active learning, which is essential for fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as advocated by Afolabi (2020).

While a majority of respondents (68%) prioritize knowledge transmission, only 20% focus on developing critical thinking skills. This reflects a trend noted in existing literature, where behaviorist approaches, characterized by rote memorization and teacher-centered instruction, dominate Nigerian secondary education (Adeyemi, 2018; Ololubo, 2020). The limited emphasis on critical thinking in the current study mirrors concerns raised by Afolabi (2020) regarding the need for mentalist approaches that promote cognitive development and creativity. This gap highlights the necessity for professional development programs that equip teachers with strategies to integrate critical thinking into their curricula. The study's finding that 60% of respondents utilize group discussions as a primary teaching method reflects a shift towards more collaborative learning environments. This is consistent with the advocacy for student-centered learning approaches in the literature, which argue that collaborative methods enhance peer interaction and engagement (Okebukola, 2015). However, the reliance on traditional methods such as textbook-based instruction (22%) and lecture-based instruction (12%) suggests that many teachers still adhere to behaviorist practices. This duality in teaching methods is echoed in the literature, where the persistence of teacher-centered approaches is noted as a barrier to effective learning (Adeyemi, 2018).

The preference for written evaluations, particularly essay questions and multiple-choice tests, aligns with traditional assessment practices prevalent in Nigerian schools. While these methods can provide insights into student understanding, they may not fully capture the depth of learning or the application of knowledge (Hativa, 2013). The literature suggests that diverse assessment methods, including formative assessments and project-based evaluations, are essential for a comprehensive understanding of student learning (Khan, 2016). The findings from the current study indicate a need for teachers to explore alternative assessment strategies that align with the goals of fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

The significant influence of curriculum design on teaching approaches (55% of respondents) underscores the importance of a well-structured curriculum in shaping educational practices. This finding is supported by existing literature, which emphasizes that curriculum development should align with educational goals to enhance teaching effectiveness (Afolabi, 2020). The study highlights the need for ongoing curriculum evaluation and reform to ensure that it supports innovative teaching methods and addresses the diverse needs of students. The data indicating that 62% of students process information moderately suggests that teachers may need to differentiate their instruction to accommodate varying learning speeds. This is consistent with the literature, which advocates for differentiated instruction as a means to meet the diverse needs of learners (Okebukola, 2015). The findings suggest that teachers in Yola should consider implementing strategies that cater to different learning paces to enhance student engagement and understanding.

The high frequency of assessments, with 48% of respondents assessing student learning daily or weekly, reflects a commitment to monitoring student progress. However, this practice may lead to assessment fatigue, as noted in the literature (Hativa, 2013). Balancing assessment with meaningful feedback and opportunities for reflection is essential for promoting a positive learning environment and ensuring that assessments serve as tools for learning rather than mere evaluations. In conclusion, the results of this study provide valuable insights into the teaching practices of secondary school teachers in Yola, revealing both strengths.

6 Summary of Findings

Based on the findings from the study, the teaching methods in some secondary schools in Yola are predominantly behaviorist-oriented. Here are the key points that support this conclusion:

i. **Prevalence of Behaviorist Approach**: The data indicates that 42% of the

respondents primarily utilize the behaviorist approach, which emphasizes observable behaviors and measurable outcomes. This suggests a significant reliance on methods that focus on direct instruction and reinforcement of specific behaviors.

ii. **Eclectic Teaching Methods**: While a majority (58%) of teachers reported using a combination of approaches (eclectic methods), the fact that a substantial portion still aligns with behaviorist principles indicates that behaviorism plays a significant role in their teaching practices. The eclectic approach may incorporate behaviorist strategies alongside other methods, but the foundational emphasis appears to be on behaviorist techniques.

iii. **Assessment Methods**: The preference for written evaluations, such as essay questions and multiple-choice tests, aligns with behaviorist principles, which often prioritize measurable outcomes and performance metrics. This focus on assessment types that evaluate observable knowledge and skills further supports the behaviorist orientation.

iv. **Classroom Management Focus**: The reasons behind the preferred teaching approaches highlight a focus on creating effective classroom management systems (42% of respondents). This aligns with behaviorist strategies that emphasize structure and control in the learning environment.

v. **Lack of Mentalist Approach**: Notably, none of the respondents identified with the mentalist approach, which focuses on internal cognitive processes and understanding. This absence suggests that there is little emphasis on fostering critical thinking and deeper cognitive engagement, which are hallmarks of mentalist teaching.

In summary, while there is some diversity in teaching methods, the findings indicate that the teaching practices in secondary schools in Yola are primarily behaviorist-oriented, with a significant emphasis on observable outcomes, structured classroom management, and traditional assessment methods. The lack of representation of mentalist approaches further reinforces this conclusion.

8 Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have several implications for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in the Nigerian education system. The dominance of behaviorist approaches highlights the need for targeted professional development programs that equip teachers with the skills to implement student-centered and mentalist approaches. Training should focus on fostering critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills among students. The study underscores the necessity for curriculum reforms that promote innovative teaching methods. A curriculum that encourages collaborative learning and critical thinking will better prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century. The reliance on traditional assessment methods suggests a need for diversification in evaluation strategies. Implementing formative assessments and project-based evaluations can provide a more comprehensive understanding of student learning and development. The findings can inform educational policies aimed at enhancing teaching practices in Nigerian secondary schools. Policymakers should consider integrating mentalist approaches into educational frameworks to promote effective teaching and learning.

9 Conclusion

This study has provided valuable insights into the teaching methods employed in selected secondary schools in Yola, Adamawa State, revealing a significant preference for behaviorist approaches among educators. However, it also highlights a noteworthy integration of mentalist principles, suggesting a shift towards more student-centered learning practices. The findings underscore the necessity of re-evaluating traditional pedagogical frameworks to enhance educational outcomes in Nigerian secondary schools. The conceptual implications of this research are profound, as it bridges the gap between behaviorist and mentalist theories, advocating for a balanced approach to teaching. By demonstrating that effective learning can be achieved through a combination of both methodologies, the study challenges the binary perception of these theories as mutually exclusive. This integrated perspective encourages educators to adopt a more holistic

view of teaching, recognizing the importance of both knowledge transmission and cognitive development.

The theoretical implications are equally significant. The findings support the notion that while behaviorist methods are effective for certain aspects of learning, they must be complemented by mentalist approaches that foster critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. This dual framework aligns with contemporary educational goals, emphasizing the need for pedagogical practices that prepare students for the complexities of the 21st century. The study thus contributes to the ongoing discourse on educational theory by advocating for a more nuanced understanding of teaching methodologies.

In contrast to previous studies that predominantly highlighted the dominance of behaviorist approaches in Nigerian secondary education, this research reveals a more complex landscape. While earlier works often criticized behaviorist methods for their limitations in promoting higher-order thinking skills, this study acknowledges their utility while simultaneously advocating for the integration of mentalist strategies. This nuanced approach reflects a growing recognition of the need for pedagogical diversity in teaching practices. Moreover, unlike prior research that primarily focused on southern Nigerian states, this study fills a critical geographical gap by examining teaching methods in northern Nigeria, specifically in Yola. This localized focus not only enriches the existing literature but also provides context-specific insights that are essential for understanding the unique challenges faced by educators in this region. In conclusion, this study not only reinforces the importance of both behaviorist and mentalist approaches in teaching but also calls for a transformative shift in educational practices. By advocating for a balanced integration of these methodologies, the findings contribute to the development of more effective teaching strategies that can enhance student engagement and learning outcomes in Nigerian secondary schools. Future research should continue to explore this integration across different contexts to further validate and expand upon these findings.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study on teaching methods in secondary schools in Yola, the following recommendations can be made: There should be implementation of targeted professional development initiatives that focus on equipping teachers with strategies to integrate student-centered and mentalist approaches into their teaching. This training should emphasize fostering critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills among students. Teachers should embrace the adoption of diverse assessment strategies beyond traditional methods. Incorporating formative assessments and project-based evaluations can provide a more comprehensive understanding of student learning and development, moving away from a sole focus on rote memorization. There should be promotion of teaching practices that actively involve students in the learning process. Given that a majority of teachers recognize the importance of student participation, strategies that enhance engagement should be prioritized to improve learning outcomes. There should also be provision of resources and training for teachers to implement differentiated instruction strategies that cater to the varying learning speeds and styles of students. This approach can help address the diverse needs of learners and enhance overall student engagement. By implementing these recommendations, educators and policymakers can work towards improving teaching practices and student outcomes in secondary schools in Yola and similar contexts.

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