



JOURNAL OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION (JSTE)

**A PUBLICATION OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY & MATHEMATICS
EDUCATION (STME),
NASARAWA STATE UNIVERSITY, KEFFI**



**VOLUME
9**

ISSN: 2651-5539

ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY AND USAGE OF BASIC SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TEXTBOOKS IN BASIC EDUCATION SCHOOLS IN NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Citation: Zhekaba I. J., Uzoечи. B. C. & Eshi. I. A. (2025). Assessment of quality and usage of basic science and technology textbooks in basic education schools in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. *Journal of Science, Technology, and Education (JSTE)*; www.nsukjste.com/ 9(8), 96-108

Abstract

This study assessed the quality and usage of basic science and technology textbooks in basic education schools in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for the study; four research questions guided the study; the population of the study comprised all the 1065 basic science and technology teachers in Nasarawa State; and the study utilized a sample size of 290 basic science and technology teachers, drawn through the Taro Yamani formula. Assessment Questionnaire for Basic Science and Technology Teachers (AQBSTT), with a reliability index of 0.93, was used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The data obtained were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. From the result of the analysis of data obtained,

there was no significant difference in the mean response in the extent of usage and quality of the recommended basic science and technology textbooks in primary schools in Nasarawa State. It was recommended that the government should intensify its efforts to revise the basic science and technology textbooks to ensure they cover all essential topics comprehensively. Involve experienced teachers and subject matter experts in the revision process to identify and fill content gaps. Invest in high-quality printing materials to produce textbooks that are durable and visually appealing. High-quality print can improve readability and increase the lifespan of the textbooks, making them more valuable resources for students and teachers.

Keyword: Assessment, Quality, Usage, Basic Science, Technology, Textbooks, Basic Education

Introduction

Education is the cornerstone of societal development and the quality of educational materials plays a pivotal role in shaping the learning experience. In the context of Basic

education, these materials lay foundation for a child's understanding of fundamental concepts, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. However, the accessibility, quality, and utilization of these textbooks can vary

significantly between private and public schools, as well as across urban and rural environments (Aravalli & Santosh, 2015).

In Nigeria, education is perceived as an instrument for achievement of national objectives (Odilia, Ebisine & Ajuar, 2011). The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014), education is an “instrument per excellence” for achievement of national development. This explains the reason for money government earmarks for education in its annual budget. To buttress the emphasis on science and technology education in the National Policy on Education, Basic Science has been made mandatory as a subject for all Nigerian children at the Basic Education level.

Basic Education is the initial stage of formal education given to individual (child) from six years’ primary school to the end of three years’ junior secondary school (Davis & Asukwo, 2015). The national policy on education ((FRN, 2014), present basic education as an ambitious educational programme aimed to eradicate illiteracy, ignorance, and poverty. It is in the real sense directed to stimulate, accelerate national development, political consciousness and national integration. Achieving quality of basic science and technology education according to federal government is the education for all and the responsibility of all and sundry; from government to non-governmental organization down to the individuals. Basic science and Technology is taught to pupils, at this level of education, because it provides the prerequisite knowledge, attitude and skills upon which

subsequent scientific and technological advancement will be based.

Basic Science and Technology collaborate with the society to bring about sustainable development (Chima, 2021). Basic Science and Technology literacy are understood to mean basic scientific and technological knowledge and skills needed to understand our physical world, environmental problems the role and function of technology in a society increasingly marked by global interconnected networks. The Basic Science and Technology, Active series is a unique one developed strictly in line with the aims and requirements of the Basic Education Curriculum published by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2013). This is to help children to develop reflective thinking and good habits which are needed for scientific method and successful future life (Nwachukwu, 2017). Basic Science and Technology is aimed at enabling the children who are exposed to it to acquire the specific science process skills such as observing, organizing information acquired, generalizing based on acquired information, predicting as a result of generalization and designing experiment to check predictions (FRN, 2014). Basic Science is also a subject which is trusted to grant the pupils general education and emphasizes the importance of observation for increased understanding of the environment.

The subject (Basic Science and Technology) prepares pupils at the lower basic level for the study of core science subjects (biology, chemistry and physics) at the senior secondary school level (Chukwuneke & Chikwenze 2015).

By implication, this will be of great importance to man by getting swindled into obscurity and extinction while he still lives on earth. It serves as the bedrock which provides the required training in scientific skills to meet the growing needs of the society. It is the fundamental knowledge acquired through basic science at the Basic Education level that leads to the transformation of the world through dramatic advances in almost all fields of human endeavour such as medicine, engineering, electronics and aeronautics among others. The Basic Science and Technology is the product of re-alignment and restructured of the revised curricula for Primary Science and Junior Secondary School Integrated Science. Basic Science properly evolved from Integrated Science. Integrated Science is a science presented to child in such a way that the child gains the concept of the fundamental unity of science, the commonality of approach to problems of scientific nature and an understanding of the role and function of science in everyday life and the world in which they live (FRN, 2014). This therefore calls for the preparedness of Science, Technology and Mathematics Education (STME) teachers towards effective reform of STME, which has prompted the production of basic science and technology textbooks in primary schools.

The Basic Science and technology curriculum is a compartmentalized curriculum in which subject matter are integrated from the various science subject areas such as Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Astronomy, Geology, Environmental Science and synthesized to

provide a holistic and a compartmentalized syllabus for unify nature of science (FRN, 2014). Nations all over the world (including Nigeria), strive to have its citizens educated in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines (Ndirika 2014); Umar & Salihu 2015; Enemarie, 2016; Nwachukwu 2017 & Ajayi 2017). The reason is not far-fetched; there are numerous contributions of science and technology to human development. Nigeria as a developing nation has made quite commendable efforts to enhance scientific literacy of its citizens. Consequent upon these efforts, Nigerian policymakers and educators recognize the role of science and technology in the achievement of education for all and national development in the present millennium (Ogundele, Okunlola, Damilola & Godfrey, 2020). Basic Science and Technology curriculum content was conceived out of the present needs and desire of the Nigerian society to instils in pupils the scientific reflective reason at a tender age. The UBE Act (2004) provided the legal framework for the programme and an indication of its effective take-off. The curriculum was implemented in September 2008 in primary one, in primary schools in Nigeria. To move with this pace, Basic Science is taught at the primary school so as to catch the pupils' heart young. As a follow up, Basic Science is taught at the upper basic education level to enable pupils to build up and concretize the knowledge of science they had at the primary school level and to lay the foundation for the study of the core science subjects such as Biology, physics and chemistry at the senior secondary level of education. The provisions of the MDGs

(Millennium Development Goals) and the NEEDS (National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies) profoundly influenced the objectives, contents, materials and methods of the basic education curriculum (Odili, Ebisine & Ajuar, 2011). According to UNESCO and Ibe (2016), Textbooks are guides, aids to a prescribed curriculum and syllabus which ensure that topics covered are similar across different schools and states, it is easily accessible reference point and it is a readily available source of information. Using textbooks make teaching of various subjects systematic as it is arranged according to themes.

Ekundayo (2012) opined that the assessment of basic science and technology textbooks connote the process of checking the types, model and extent the basic science and technology textbooks are being used to evaluate measure and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition or educational needs of the pupils. It is important for Monitoring and following the progress of basic science textbooks, providing feedback about pupils' achievement, specifying suitable teaching materials and activities, discovering what pupils have learned and what they still need to learn, providing checklists as to find what is common and the distinction among basic science textbooks in public schools, private schools, rural and urban schools and its usage. It is therefore against this background that this study is seeking to assess the quality and usage of basic science and technology textbooks in primary school in Nasarawa state, Nigeria.

Understanding how socio-economic and geographical factors impact the availability and effectiveness of educational resources will provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and curriculum developers striving to enhance primary education nationwide.

Cunningsworth (1995) and Ellis (1997) believe that textbook assessment helps teachers to move beyond, acquire useful, accurate, systematic and contextual insights into the nature of textbook material. Textbook assessment could also be a valuable component of teacher training programs for, it serves the purpose of making students and teachers aware of important features to look for. Basic Science and Technology Textbooks; are educational materials specifically designed for teaching and learning of basic concepts and principles in the fields of science and technology at an elementary or foundational level of basic education.

Ogunjobi (2016), Opined that urban and rural schools represent distinct settings characterized by their geographical locations and associated socio-economic and infrastructural differences. Urban schools are situated in densely populated areas, typically cities or towns and are characterized by greater access to resources, diverse extracurricular opportunities, and a more extensive network of educational services. These institutions often face challenges related to larger student populations and greater cultural diversity, while rural schools are in sparsely populated regions, often distant from urban centres and may encounter challenges related to limited resources, including fewer educational facilities and a narrower range of extracurricular

activities. These schools often foster close-knit communities and face unique challenges such as transportation issues. Understanding the dynamics of urban and rural schools is crucial in addressing disparities in educational access, quality and outcomes, thereby informing policy and resource allocation for a more equitable education system.

Sarvapalli and Santosh (2015), Defined public schools as institutions funded and operated by governmental bodies, such as federal, state, or local authorities, relying on taxpayer funds to provide free education to students within a specific geographic area. Public schools are subject to governmental regulations, administered by elected or appointed officials, and generally prioritize inclusivity, admitting students based on residency. Conversely, they defined private schools as schools financed through tuition fees, donations and other private sources rather than government funding. Private schools operate with more autonomy in decision-making, often governed by private entities or boards, and can be selective in their admissions. The distinction lies in their funding structure, governance and accessibility policies, contributing to varied educational experiences and opportunities for students within these two distinct sectors of the education system. Another significant consideration is the ratio of textbooks to pupils (Pupil / textbook ratio is the average number of pupils for every textbook in schools), which directly impacts the quality of education. In many instances, schools are grapple with insufficient resources, leading to situations

where multiple students must share a single textbook.

Ogunjobi, (2019) opined that, textbook utilization is how often and effectively the textbooks are being used in the classroom. That utilization can be measured by: The frequency of textbook use by teachers and students, the extent to which textbooks are integrated into daily lesson plans and classroom activities and Teachers' and students' reliance on textbooks for homework and study.

Assessing textbook utilization can help determine if textbooks are being used as intended and if they are accessible to students and teachers.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to assess the quality and usage of basic science and technology textbooks in Basic Education schools in Nasarawa state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study is set to:

1. Find out the extent to which the recommended Basic Science and Technology Textbooks are used in Basic Education schools in Nasarawa state
2. To fine out the quality of the recommended Basic Science and Technology Textbooks in Basic Education schools in Nasarawa state

Research Questions

The following research question guided the study.

1. To what extent are the recommended basic science and technology textbooks used in Basic Education Schools in Nasarawa state?
2. What is the quality of basic science and technology textbooks in Basic Education schools in Nasarawa state?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- H₀₁: there is no significance difference in the mean response on the extent of usage of the recommended basic science and technology textbooks that are used in Basic Education schools between Rural and Urban Basic Education schools in Nasarawa state
- H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean response on the quality of the recommended basic science and technology Textbooks between Rural and Urban Basic Education schools in Nasarawa state

Methodology

Results

Result are presented in line with the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to assess the quality and usage of Basic Science and Technology textbooks in Basic Education Schools in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The design provided a comprehensive overview of the current state of these textbooks in the schools. The study aimed to gather data on the availability, accessibility, and utilization of the textbooks, as well as their quality in terms of content, illustrations, and overall presentation.

The population consisted of 1065 Basic Science and Technology teachers in public and private schools in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. A sample of 290 teachers was selected using Yaro Yamani's formula. This sampling technique ensured that the sample was representative of the population.

The instrument used for data collection was the "Assessment Questionnaire for Basic Science and Technology Teachers" (AQBSTT), which comprised four sections (A-D). The questionnaire aimed to gather information on the teachers' perceptions of the quality and usage of the textbooks, as well as the challenges they faced in using them.

Research Question One

To what extent are the recommended basic science and technology textbooks used in Basic Education Schools in Nasarawa state?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Extent of Usage of the Recommended Basic Science and Technology Textbooks in Nasarawa State

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1	I use real-world examples from the recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks in my lessons	2.39	1.06	LE
2	My pupils use the recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks during class for information	2.45	1.06	LE
3	I use the recommended basic science and technology textbooks to plan my lessons	2.25	1.01	LE
4	I used the recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks as a primary resource for teaching Basic Science and Technology concepts	2.32	0.99	LE
5	I use the recommended basic science and technology textbooks for homework to reinforce learning	2.44	1.08	LE
6	Learners use the textbooks for self-study	2.41	1.13	LE
7	I use the recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks to guide experiments, demonstrations and practical activities in the classroom	2.39	1.04	LE
8	I use the recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks to encourage discussions among students in the classroom	2.39	1.09	LE
9	I use the recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks to organize activities in class	2.40	1.07	LE
Mean of Means		2.38		

The data in Table 1 showed the extent to which the recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks are used in Basic Education schools in Nasarawa state, as indicated by the overall mean score of 2.38 which is below the decision mark of 2.50, it therefore imply that, the extent to which basic science and technology textbooks are being used in basic education schools is low in Nasarawa state.

Hypothesis One

There is no significance difference in mean responses of the extent of usage of the recommended basic science and technology textbooks that are used in Basic Education schools between Rural and Urban Basic Education schools in Nasarawa state.

Table 2: t-test on the Extent of Usage of the Recommended Basic Science and Technology Textbooks Used Rural and Urban Basic Education Schools in Nasarawa State

	Location	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test for Equality of Means		
					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Usage	Urban	9	2.4356	0.08633			
	Rural	9	2.3222	0.30116	1.085	16	0.294

Table 2 shows the result oft-test on the Extent of Usage of the Recommended Basic Science and Technology Textbooks in Rural and Urban Basic Education schools in Nasarawa state, it revealed that the p-value (0.294) is greater than the significance level (0.05), the null hypothesis was

therefore not rejected. This means there was no statistically significant difference in the extent of usage of the recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks in rural and urban Basic Education schools in Nasarawa state.

Research Question Two

What is the quality of basic science and technology textbooks in Basic Education schools in Nasarawa state?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Quality of Basic Science and Technology Textbooks in Basic Education Schools in Nasarawa State

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1	The recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks we use cover essential topics	2.40	1.04	Disagree
2	The recommended Basic Science and Technology Textbooks has achievable learning objectives	2.59	1.14	Agree
3	The recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks printed are of standard quality	2.51	1.13	Agree
4	The recommended Basic science and technology textbooks provided have practical applications of the subject matter	2.39	1.04	Disagree
5	The recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks has appropriate illustrations	2.40	1.06	Disagree
6	The recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks cater for the needs of students with diverse learning styles	2.49	1.06	Disagree
7	The recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks promote critical thinking	2.65	1.08	Agree
8	The recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks promote problem-solving skills	2.57	1.07	Agree
9	The recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks support engaging classroom activities	2.57	1.06	Agree
10	The recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks incorporate real-life examples	2.27	1.04	Disagree
11	Exercises are provided in the recommended Basic Science and Technology Textbooks	2.34	1.07	Disagree
12	The recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks is adequate in guiding experiments in the classroom	2.22	1.03	Disagree
Mean of Means		2.45		Disagree

Table 3 showed the extent to which the quality of the recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks in Basic Education schools in Nasarawa state, as indicated by the overall mean score of 2.45, the result revealed

that, the overall means score of 2.45 which was below the decision mark of 2.50, it therefore imply that there was low quality of the basic science and technology textbooks in basic education schools in Nasarawa state

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of the quality of the recommended

basic science and technology Textbooks between Rural and Urban Basic Education schools in Nasarawa state

Table 4: t-tests on the Quality of the Recommended Basic Science and Technology Textbooks Between Rural and Urban Schools N Nasarawa State

	Location	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test for Equality of Means		
					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Quality	Urban	12	2.4317	0.10026			
	Rural	12	2.4808	0.36716	-0.447	22	0.659

Table 4 shows the t-test on the quality of the recommended basic science and technology Textbooks between Rural and urban schools in Nasarawa state. The result revealed that the p-value (0.659) was greater than the significance level (0.05); the null hypothesis was therefore

not rejected. This means there was no statistically significant difference in the quality of the recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks between rural and urban Basic Education schools in Nasarawa state.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study highlighted critical issues in the assessment of usage and quality of Basic Science and Technology textbooks in Nasarawa state's Basic Education schools.

The findings showed that the usage of the recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks in Basic Education schools in Nasarawa state are not heavily utilized in classrooms.

The findings also showed that the extent of usage of the recommended Basic Science and Technology textbooks in Basic Education schools between urban and rural schools in Nasarawa state has no significant difference. Both urban and rural schools in Nasarawa state exhibit similar patterns in textbook usage, indicating that geographic location does not influence how frequently these textbooks are used in the classrooms. This was in line with the findings of Owan, Agurokpon and Owan (2022)

that evaluated the Availability and Utilization Status of Texts in Core Subjects in Primary Schools' Libraries in Obubra local government area of River state, Nigeria.

From research question two, the findings of the study revealed that the overall perception among teachers of the recommended basic science technology textbooks is negative, with an overall mean score of 2.45. Specific criticisms include inadequate coverage of essential topics, poor quality of printed materials and a lack of practical applications and appropriate illustrations. The findings also revealed that the perceived textbook quality between urban and rural schools has no significant difference, suggesting that the quality issues are consistent across different locations within Nasarawa state. This uniform dissatisfaction points to systemic issues with the textbooks themselves rather than locating-specific problems. This study is line with the findings of Paul (2018) in Osun state, Nigeria which found out that, Teachers and students expressed satisfaction with the overall quality of the textbooks. The study highlighted that the textbooks were considered useful and effective in facilitating teaching and learning.

Conclusion

This study, "Assessment of Quality and Usage of Basic Science and Technology Textbooks in primary schools in Nasarawa State's," provides a comprehensive evaluation of the current state of educational resources within the state, it highlights significant issues with textbook usage and quality, revealing a reliance on alternative resources and methods by teachers. Uniform

patterns in textbook utilization across urban and rural schools suggest systemic issues rather than location-specific problems.

Teachers' perceptions of textbook quality are largely negative, issues such as inadequate topic coverage, poor material quality and lack of practical applications highlight that the textbooks are not effectively supporting the curriculum. The poor alignment between textbooks and the curriculum further complicates students' learning experiences.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study's, the following recommendations were made to address the issues with Basic Science and Technology textbooks in Nasarawa State's Basic Education schools, government should intensify effort to:

1. Revise the Basic Science and Technology textbooks to ensure they cover all essential topics comprehensively. Involve experienced teachers and subject matter experts in the revision process to identify and fill content gaps.
2. Invest in high-quality printing materials to produce textbooks that are durable and visually appealing. As high-quality print can improve readability and increase the lifespan of the textbooks, making them more valuable resources for students and teachers.
3. Government should establish a system for ongoing monitoring and evaluation

of textbook usage and effectiveness. Collect feedback from teachers and students regularly to identify areas for improvement. Use this feedback to make data-driven decisions on future textbook revisions and resource allocation.

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