

RESPONDENTS' ATTITUDE AS A FACTOR IN THE DWINDLING GENUINE
RESEARCHES IN EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study examined the attitudes of respondents to educational data gathering instruments in relation to the dwindling genuine researches in education. It also examined the influence of status of researchers on these attitudes. Subjects consisted of 35 lecturers and IS post-graduate students, who were selected through stratified random sampling technique. Subjects responded to a validated instrument tagged "Respondents' Attitudinal Disposition to Data Collection Questionnaire RADDCQ" with reliability coefficient of .71. The collected data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, Rank-ordering and Spearman's Rho statistical analyses. The results of these analyses indicated that generally, people have low and unfavourable attitudes toward: responding to research instruments in education. Furthermore, status of the researcher has significant Correlation with] attitudinal disposition of respondents. Recommendations were made that research instruments should be properly constructed for ease of response, and that benefits of research findings should be made available and understandable to end-users, towards improved educational practices.

Introduction

Researches, whether in education or any other field of study, are directed towards solving identified problems. This is necessary to bring about improvement and further development in human knowledge and condition. Due to the enormity of problems confronting educational planners and policymakers, there is the dire need for them to make logical, dependable and reliable decisions that would facilitate overall development of education. Advances already made in the field of educational research have resulted in enhanced, more efficacious and efficient educational practices. It is important to note that the overall development of a nation is largely dependent on its educational development.

Expectedly therefore, nations that realised the indispensability of researches to national development early enough now lead other nations in terms of advancement. In developing countries, such as Nigeria, educational research can hardly be said to have progressed far beyond what might be described as the threshold level. Responsible for this problem, according to Nworgu (1991), apart from infrastructural problems and poor funding, are manpower factors and poor attitudes to research. This poor attitudinal disposition of people to research in educational system has manifested in inadequate knowledge about the functioning of the system.

Conceptually, research is a systematic investigation into the unknown, with a view to finding solutions to problems or answers to questions. Research also incorporates any systematic and scholarly application of principles of a science of behaviour to the problems of man within his social context (Cohen and Manion, 1980). When related to education, research is the application of these principles to the problems of teaching and learning with a view 'to improving educational practices. Educational research therefore is a systematic process of arriving at dependable solutions to educational problems through planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. Findings from the analysis of data help in improving educational efficacy by guiding events towards desirable ends. Such ends include among others, the production of important information for planning educational activities; the evaluation of adequate and valid theory about educational processes and institutions (Huffrer, 1983 p. 57). Educational development and meaningful growth hardly take place without planning based on authentic data. Among the characteristics of effective planning is that the plan must be based on available facts and sound premises, and not on mere opinion or rule of thumb (Adepoju, 1998). Thus, meaningful educational development cannot take place without adequate and truthful data, obtainable only through genuine researches. Consequently, a very crucial aspect of educational research, and in fact, research in any field of study is data collection. Data collection process includes the routine aspects of administering the instrument(s), keeping records, scheduling and so on. Various methods of data collection can be considered in educational research. Some of these methods of data collection can be considered in educational research. Some of these methods are the test, questionnaire, rating scale, checklist and interview. The most commonly used methods are the questionnaire and interviews. The data so collected are

then processed to findings on which conclusions and recommendations towards solving the identified problems are made.

Respondents' attitude to research instruments could be predicated on many factors. Among the likely factors could be the usefulness of the research to the respondents, the degree of anonymity allowed in order to remove bias and how rewarding past efforts on information supply have been. Moreover, respondents' attitude might be responsible for inadequate information on certain aspects of education such as finances. Consequently, according to Olomolaye (1997), even for academic purposes, researchers are 'scared'¹ of some aspects like educational finances for fear of non-cooperation from respondents. In addition, the quality of the instrument in terms of clarity, conciseness and ease of completion might influence the attitudinal disposition of respondents. The caliber of the researcher (either of a superior, equal or lower rank) and the follow-up procedures are also important factors in the final turnout of information.

This study was therefore designed to examine respondents' attitude to research in education with regards to the dearth of genuine researches in education, and the factors attributable to this attitude.

The Problem

In conducting educational research, there is the need for human consideration. This is because of the importance of people's cooperation in collecting data. Hence, the problem of how to get people to supply the needed information may be as important to the success of the research as the methods and materials used in the study.

The reason for the dwindling reliable research findings in education might not be far from difficulties in getting relevant data on which to base the findings. Could the attitude of responsible for low turnout of information?

General Questions

The design for this study is a descriptive survey. The study involved analysis of this opinions of educational researchers (lecturer; and post-graduate students) on people's attitude: to data collection process. The sample used for the study consisted of lecturers and post-graduate students in the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin. Then groups had carried out researches either for academic purposes and or for professional development. Using a stratified random sampling technique; 50 respondents were selected (35 lecturers and 15

Postgraduate (Ph.D) students). The sample was taken from all lecturers and doctoral students of the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin.

The main instrument used for collecting data was a questionnaire tagged "Respondents' Attitudinal Disposition to Data Collection Questionnaire (RADDCQ)". The instrument had two sections 'A' and 'B'. Section 'A' sought personal information such as sex and status (lecturer or student), while section B had items on people's attitudes to research data collection and factors responsible for this attitude.

The- instrument designed by the investigator, was face and content validated by incorporating suggestions of experts in measurement and evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was also ascertained through a test-retest method, giving a reliability coefficient of .71.

Data Analysis and Results

The data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, Rank-Or bearing and Spearman's Rho Statistical analysis. The result of these analyses are presented, according to the research questions, as follow:

Question 1: What is the attitudinal disposition of people to data supply in educational research as perceives by lecturers and post-graduate students?

Table 1: Response on People's Attitudinal Disposition to Data Supply in Educational Research

S/N	Attitude	Lecturers		Students	
		No Agreed	%	No Agreed	%
	Respondents generally:				
1.	take response to research instrument in education with loyalty	20	57.14	11	73.3
2.	Complain of being too busy to spare time for supplying data on educational research	29	82.86	13	86.7
3.	fear that data supplied might be used against them	17	48.5"	8	53.7
4.	view educational research mainly as an academic exercise without applicability to solving educational problems	19	54.29	9	60.0
5.	believe that past efforts on data supply have not been rewarding in terms of usability	19	54.29	14	93.3
	Overall %		59.43		73.32

As shown in Table 1, educational researchers felt that prospective respondents' attitudinal disposition to supplying relevant educational data was not favourable (lecturers 59.43%, post-graduate students 73.32%). Specifically majority of the respondents agreed that people take response to research instruments with levity. Complaint of being too busy was also perceived as a general attitude of respondents (82.86% by lecturers and 86.70% by student). Equally" perceived as attitude of researchers were fear of data being used against them and futility of educational research in its applicability. It should be noted however, that student-researchers perceived these negative attitudes in greater perspectives than the lecturers (73.32% and 59.43% respectively).

Question 2: Is there any correlation between the ranking of lecturers and postgraduate students with regards to factors responsible for people's attitudes to supplying data on educational research?

Table 2: Spearman's Rho Analysis on Lecturers and Students' Rankings of the Factors of Respondents' Attitude to Research Instruments in Education

S/N	Factors	Lecturers		Students		d	d ²
		No of Responses	Ranking	No of Responses	Ranking		
1.	Preparation of the instrument (length, ease of completion, appropriate use of language etc.)	15	1	4	2	-1	1
2.	Sponsorship of the instrument (by boss, colleague, junior)	6	3	0	5	-2	4
3.	Interest aroused by the content of the instrument	9	2	3	3	-1	1
4.	Follow-up procedures used in ensuring adequate data collection.	4	4	7	1	3	9
5.	How rewarding past efforts on data supply have been.	1	5	1	4	1	1

$$\begin{aligned}
 P &= 1 - \frac{6 \sum Ed^2}{N(N^2 - 1)} & &= 1 - \frac{96}{120} & & d^2 = 16 \\
 &= 1 - \frac{6(16)}{5(5-1)} & &= 1 - 0.8 & & \\
 & & &= 0.20 & &
 \end{aligned}$$

The Rho coefficient of 0.20 in Table 2 indicated a weak positive correlation between the rankings of lecturers and post-graduate students the factors responsible for people's attitudes towards data supply in educational research. That is, the two groups had different ranks on most of the five factors responsible for people's response to data supply on research instrument. For instance, while students ranked first the follow-up procedures after administering the instruments) lecturers ranked same fourth. Other rankings are shown in Table 2.

Discussion of Results

This study examined the attitudes of people to supplying the necessary data in educational research. An extension of the purpose of the study was to find out if there was any correlation between attitudes of people towards research data supply and respondents status and gender.

The findings in Table 1 showed that Respondents' general attitude to supplying data on educational research was unfavourable. This is evident from the high percentage perceptions of lecturers and post-graduate students that respondents take data collection instruments with levity and believe that educational researches are more of an academic exercise (59.43% and 73.32% respectively). They give various excuses such as lack of time to spare to supply data and the belief that researches in education are out of touch with practical problems of the schools. These attitudes might not be unrelated to what Aikcn (1981) regarded us a gap existing between practitioners and educational researchers. This might have stemmed from the belief that past efforts on data supply have not been rewarding (93.3% and 54.3% for students and' lecturers respectively). In addition the relatively low perception of educational research as a measure to improve educational practices is a pointer to this existing gap. There is thus the need for mutual understanding and cooperation between educational researchers and end-users of research findings.

Results from Table 2 showed that lecturers and students ratings of factors of respondents' attitude to data supply differed significantly. The rating of follow-up procedures was higher by student. This is related to the sponsorship/ownership of the instrument. Lecturers have the advantage of administering research instruments to subordinates and equals such as students

and colleagues. Thus, they are likely to enjoy superiority or comradeship resulting favourable and quicker responses than in the case of student-researchers.

However, both groups perceived as important, the construction of the instrument. That is, ease of completion, appropriate use of language, cover letter/introduction, attractiveness of the instrument, all improve the willingness and cooperation of respondents. This finding tallies with Coughlin (1990)'s finding that factors such as the phrasing of questionnaire items and choice of answers available to respondents can influence greatly the outcome of a survey.

Conclusions and Suggestions

From the findings of this study it can be concluded that people's attitudes to supplying data in educational research were unfavourable to educational development. Realising the fact educational research is one important and necessary way to improve education, through proper planning, the following suggestions are made.

Efforts should be made to construct research instrument in a way that makes for easy responses. Measures to be taken include keeping the instrument as brief as possible so that it requires a minimum of the respondent's time and using appropriate language for¹ proper understanding of respondents. In addition, the instrument should have an introductory letter or part, giving the purpose of the study, the instruction for responding, confidentiality of research data and anonymity of the respondents.

It is also important to consider the right respondents to an instrument. Respondents should have the necessary information to respond correctly for the responses to be truthful. Close ended items should be used with an option of "others (please specify)" where much insights of the respondents in form of personal opinions are necessary.

Moreover, the focus of the research should be made relevant to the targeted respondents in order to enlist their interest and willingness.

The results of educational researches should be made available to educational practitioners to apply to schooling. This is the only way to ensure that education becomes increasingly effective and that it is made possible to measure this effectiveness.

In addition, certain incentives might need to be used to motivate the respondents. These incentives though could be monetary where appropriate, should essentially be in form of courtesies and recognition of the indispensability of the respondents to the success of the

research. There should be expressed both in words (written and oral) and in action.

These measures would go a long way in ensuring that educational researches bring about the desired improvement in educational practices.

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