

MY CLASS AND I CONCEPT (MCI): CHANGING STRATEGY, CHANGING EDUCATION

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Abstract

For almost two centuries of Nigeria's exposure to Western education otherwise known as conventional education, the country is still battling to get its education comparable and acceptable to the world standard. Nigeria's education standard is rated far below the world standard average. There is poor standard and quality of both teachers, teaching and needed resources, poor budget on education by the Governments, Educational policy somersault/unimplemented educational policies which suffers constant change with each change of Government, dilapidated school structures which are partially or ill-equipped, corruption with its attendant consequences etcetera, all add up to Nigeria's education predicament. Several researches were conducted, solutions were suggested and action taken, yet, the situation is worsening by the day, the standard keep falling at an alarming rate, this poses serious threat to the system and made the researcher to search for a way out of this predicament; the MCI is one such concept which is assumed will provide a remedy for the fallout of our education standard, The work utilizes longitudinal research design that will last for about six years involving primary 1 pupils of a Government School in Kano, population size is 40 in a sampled class 1A. The researcher voluntarily adopts a peer-mentoring strategy to work with a permanent teacher of the school and plans to provide all the necessary resources for the class through improvisation and personal contribution from her income. Assessment will be conducted by making a comparison between the controlled and experimental groups at the end of every term and session to ascertain the efficiency/workability of the MCI concept in remedying the decayed educational quality and standard in Kano State and Nigeria at large, using mean average, standard deviation and t-tests. The findings at the end of every session will be discussed with the stakeholders to ascertain the workability or otherwise of the concept and involve/motivate others to adopt it. It is the researcher's hope that the concept will gain recognition as a tool for fighting the peril of an age long substandard quality of education and become an adopted strategy throughout Kano state and beyond.

Keywords: MCI Concept, Education, Change, Strategy

Introduction

Education is globally accepted as detrimental for National development and social change, and a birth right of every Nigerian child irrespective of tribe, religion, ethnicity or economic background, hence, the basis why Governments all over the world strive to the commitment of educational plans, policies and implementation in an effort to make their citizens have full access to it for their self-development and that of their Nation. It is rated in Nigeria's National development plan as the staunchest criterion upon which the Nation's future and development are assessed. (Ibrahim, 2018).

It has been said time without number that Education is the most vital instrument for measuring success, achievement and development of all Nations of the world; hence, when it is utilized to its full potential in the developed countries, it faces several challenges in the developing countries. Nigeria is desirous of joining in the league of the developed countries even though it is at the forefront in decrying for fall in its Education standard and quality, which has been left to suffer some major setbacks in the last two decades. No one argues about the challenges facing this most significant sector, as such, the need to fight whatever vices inflicting it with any weapon it takes becomes paramount.

The World Bank, (1999) asserted that Education is the single most important key to development and poverty alleviation; it is thus, a catalyst for National development. This is the reason why most developing countries have been committing a lot of human and financial resources to cater for and to provide educational opportunities for their citizens at various levels.

Nigeria's Education System: Where do we go wrong?

The historical quondam of Nigeria's Education is viewed in three perspectives: The pre-colonial, Colonial and Post-independence Education Systems. It is however worth noting that long before the contacts with the Arabs in the 11th century and the Christian missionaries later in the 19th century, Nigerians had their own means of educating their younger ones known as Traditional education which aimed at preserving the cultural lives of the society and built on solid and practical foundations. The type of traditional occupations includes; traditional medicines, farming, handcrafts, blacksmithing, wood carving, cattle rearing, trading, fishing, wine tapping etcetera.

Imam in Ibrahim, (2021) asserted that in Northern Nigeria where Islam was deeply rooted, there was a uniform Qur'anic policy before the era of colonialism, and in the Southern part, each ethnic group had its own traditional form of education based on its own culture and tradition prior to British conquest of the entity known as Nigeria. The country has undoubtedly witnessed a series of reforms, innovation and change in education policies both during Colonial and post-colonial eras from initially adopted British Education System to those which reflect and suit yearning, aspirations, needs and interest of different cultures of Nigerian polity. And despite the changes, the curriculum is outdated and does not cater for the changing world where technology has taken over the control of education.

The colonial education in Nigeria was purely elitist, utilitarian and conservative. It differed slightly from that of the missionaries. The aim of colonial education was the production of low level manpower that could be cheaply used as interpreters, messengers, and clerks for the missionary endeavor. Second is grooming some indigenous youths to help the rural farmers in planting, harvesting and processing cash crops for exportation to Europe as raw materials to their industries and the third objective is to produce semi-literate citizens that could easily conform to their wishes of colonialism.

The system of education during the post-colonial era was one such that students were required to spend six years in primary school, seven years in some Nigerian states and then six or five years in secondary school and four years for higher or tertiary education. The system is known as the 6 – 5 – 4 or 7 – 5 – 4. The 6 – 3 – 3 – 4 system came into being in 1982. It was a progressive and much finer system of education which has surpassed the antiquated system of 6 – 5 – 4 or 7 – 5 – 4 (in some states) both in objectives and scope. It was designed to inject functionality into the Nigerian school system by producing graduates who would be able to make use of their hands, head and the heart (the 3Hs of education) (vanguard, 2012).

Ibrahim, (2018) asserted that in 2009, another system called the 9 - 3 – 4 system was born to replace the existing 6 – 3 – 3 – 4 system of education. The system merges the 6 primary school years and the 3-junior secondary school years and this was re-modified again to 1 - 9 - 3 - 4 structure, planned for inclusion of 5-year-old learners to one year of early childhood education before proceeding to the 9 years basic education. The Government has not fully explained what went wrong with the 6 – 3 – 3 – 4 system of education which was dumped in favor of the 9-3-4 system and which is also changed to 1 – 9– 3 – 3 – 4 system. These inconsistencies in Nigeria’s educational system coupled with unwholesome combination neglect, mismanagement and non-implementation of policies have created some major setbacks in Nigeria’s Education System and made it into a squalid state of disrepair.

The vanguard of June 28; 2012 captioned Nigeria’s educational situation as “CONFUSION IN EDUCATION: 9 – 3 – 4, 6 – 3 – 3 – 4, British, American or which curriculum?” This constant change in policies concerning Education seems a gross educational fraud that requires urgent and curative attention.

The MCI concept:

This is conceptualized by the researcher as a way of remedying the decayed education standard in Kano in particular. It is a longitudinal study designed to last for about six years starting from primary 1-6 in a Government School in Kano, where a peer-mentoring strategy will be adopted to work with a permanent teacher of the selected school and plans to provide all the necessary resources for the class through improvisation and personal/collective contributions.. It is conceived as a way to address the issue of substandard and poor quality of teaching-learning in Kano by taking action through voluntary participation and sacrifice of seasoned teachers; both retired and active in service, community members, administrators and philanthropists who

can contribute funds to cater for the volunteers who have the knowledge and skills but not the availability of fund to participate in their own schools within their communities.

Statement of the problem

It is no longer news or exaggerating the fact that Nigeria is plagued with innumerable problems in her educational sector which include poor funding of education by the Government to which the country is yet to allocate the recommended 15-20% (or 26%) mark agreed by the UNESCO for all countries of the world. Nigeria on her part budgets below 5.6% to education and is expecting miracles to take charge of her education decline, which results to poor provision of infrastructure, low teacher salaries, and shortages of qualified teachers. There is also poor facilities to equip the schools, absence of adequate teaching aids (projectors, computers laboratories and libraries), inadequate classrooms which were planned not taken into cognizance the rise in population of the country in geometric progression, poor/dilapidated learning environment, poor or substandard teachers to mention but a few add up to the decline in Nigeria's education.

Several researches conducted on the terrible state of Nigeria's educational standard have revealed that poor funding of education is rated as the number one factor that is said to have contributed to such predicament. It is evidently clear that the country's budget isn't always in favour of education. It has been mentioned time without numbers that education is always at the receiving end; always under Several researches conducted on the terrible state of Nigeria's educational standard over the last two decades -budgeted and under-funded, resources are always scarce or absent, physical structures either inadequate or where available are dilapidated, quality and standard of teaching and learning is far below the world standard average. And no one ever disputes the fact that proper financing of education would in no small way, address the myriads of problems besieging the sector, hence, the neglect (under-funding) is on the increase

Since independence in 1960, there have been changes, amendments and reviews of various kinds as far as Nigeria's Education system is concerned, but if one is to be realistic, the said changes, reviews, amendments, reforms etcetera only succeeded in producing chaos, set back and fallout of Nigeria's Education System resulting in what could perhaps be described today as educational decline. The quality and standard have long been eroded living behind only the skeletal traces and allowing private bodies to take control of Education causing colossal damage to the system; examination malpractice, impersonation, fake results, lack of interest to teacher education on the part of the students, corruption are few among the attributes of such. Other issues or factors which hamper development in education include misappropriation of education funds, poor planning and implementation of educational policies, lack of welfare to teachers and irregular payment of their salaries, poor management of education, lack of utilization of research findings, lack of probity and accountability on the part of Nigerian leaders' etcetera. Corruption to put it more correctly here is the bane of educational development in Nigeria. A great percentage of Nigerians are corrupt. Officials in the Education sector are not afraid to collect money from unqualified people to buy offer of employment to

become teachers, people do pay money to get 9 credits or distinctions without sitting for the examination, nowadays special centers are identified by parents and they willingly pay money to get their children good grades in JAMB, WAEC or NECO examinations. Even the tertiary institutions are not spared; some ungodly people do collect bribes to upgrade students' results. In the primary school sector, the story is the same, perhaps more acute; there are inadequate facilities and infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms and dilapidated buildings, unqualified teaching personnel etcetera. All these add to the major predicaments of Nigeria's Educational development.

The quality and standard of our education today suffer in the hands of those who do not value it, the policy makers/implementers, the teachers and school managers, parents, students and the Government all play a major role in one way or the other in making our Education System what it is today, this has adversely affected its impact on the Nigerian citizens. The Nation suffers when its destiny is placed in the hands of mediocre, ill-equipped, incompetent, self-centered, empty-headed workforce with low mental abilities and low self-esteem all produced by the said system which also leads to production of unable and substandard teachers, ill-equipped and impracticable technicians, quack medical practitioners and pharmacists, highly corrupt and incompetent administrators, fake accountants, impractical Engineers, lazy youth who over depend on white-collar jobs etcetera which in turn leads to massive fraud in banks and other financial institutions, collapse in building structures, miscarriage of justices in the judiciary and police force, chaos in politics and politicking, imparting of wastages and producing only theorists from our tertiary institutions, and highly corrupt work-force. Other major problems of our school system today include the menace of examination malpractice which is almost legalized as majority of the students in our academic institutions see it as their legitimate birthright, cultism is also prevalent in some institutions, drug abuse, hooliganism etcetera. All the aforementioned problems of education in Nigeria are more acute in the North. Many researchers highlighted the problems of Education as listed above and proposed ways of solving them, some were tried, several measures were put in place to solve the myriads of challenges, but sad enough, Nigeria is nowhere close to the promised destination as far as its educational standard is concerned.

The problem of this study is therefore, finding out the workability of the MCI concept which was conceptualized as a new way of tackling this menace of the fall in standard and quality of teaching-learning situation in Kano State by voluntary participation of all seasoned teachers (in all levels of education) to concentrate on the foundation level and give back to his or her Alma mater by taking a class and teach for at least two days a week and training a mentee in the school.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To adopt and apply the MCI concept in Kwalli primary school as different from other measures of addressing educational problems in Kano State.

2. To find out if there will be differences between the control and experimental groups in the same arm, in Kwalli primary school
3. To ascertain the efficiency/workability of the MCI concept in remedying the decayed educational quality and standard in Kano State and Nigeria at large.

Research questions

The work comes up with the following research questions:

1. What differentiate MCI concept from other measures of remedying the poor quality and standard of Education in Kano State and the North at large?
2. Is there any significant difference between the performance of students in experimental and control groups?
3. Will the MCI concept bring a positive impact in the development of Education by changing the strategy in dealing with the educational problems of Kano State and Nigeria?

Research Methodology

The research work utilizes a longitudinal research design that will last for about six years involving primary 1 pupils of an ordinary Government School in Kano, population size is 40 in a purposive sample class 1A (where the researcher started her primary Education in 1980). The researcher voluntarily adopts a peer-mentoring strategy to work with a permanent teacher of the school and plans to provide all the necessary resources for the class through improvisation and personal contribution from her income. Assessment will be conducted by making a comparison between the controlled and experimental groups at the end of every term and session to ascertain the efficiency/workability of the MCI concept in remedying the decayed educational quality and standard in Kano State and Nigeria at large using T-test, mean values and standard deviation.

Procedure for data Analysis

As mentioned in the methodology, mean values, standard deviation and T-test are the analytical tools to be used in the research work over the period of six years.

Pre-Treatment tests of subjects in Mathematics, English and Basic science

Statistics

	Mathematics Scores of 1A	Mathematics Scores of 1B	English Scores of 1A	English Scores of 1B	Basic Science Scores of 1A
N	40	40	40	40	40
Valid	40	40	40	40	40
Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	24.2750	22.9500	31.0750	28.7000	32.7250
Std. Deviation	13.71503	13.55511	15.74865	14.37091	14.14936
Minimum	5.00	.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Maximum	62.00	58.00	65.00	62.00	57.00

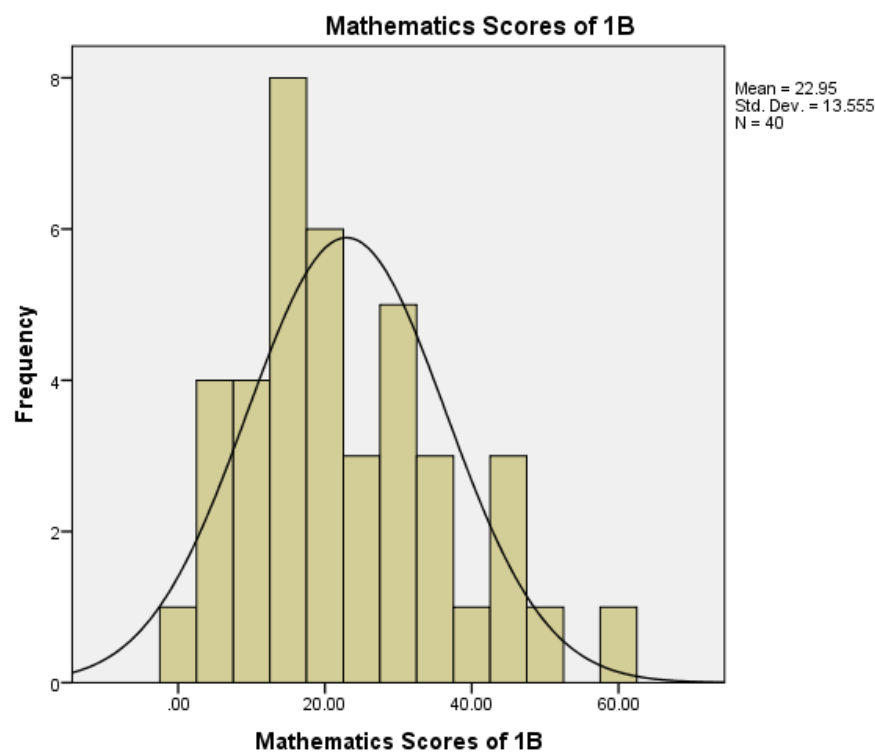
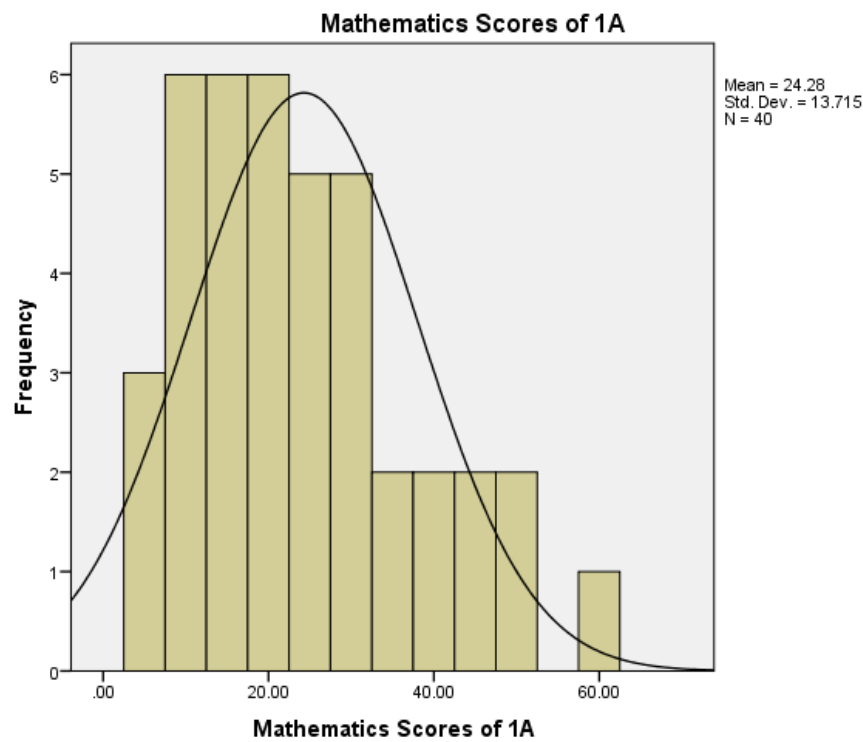
Statistics

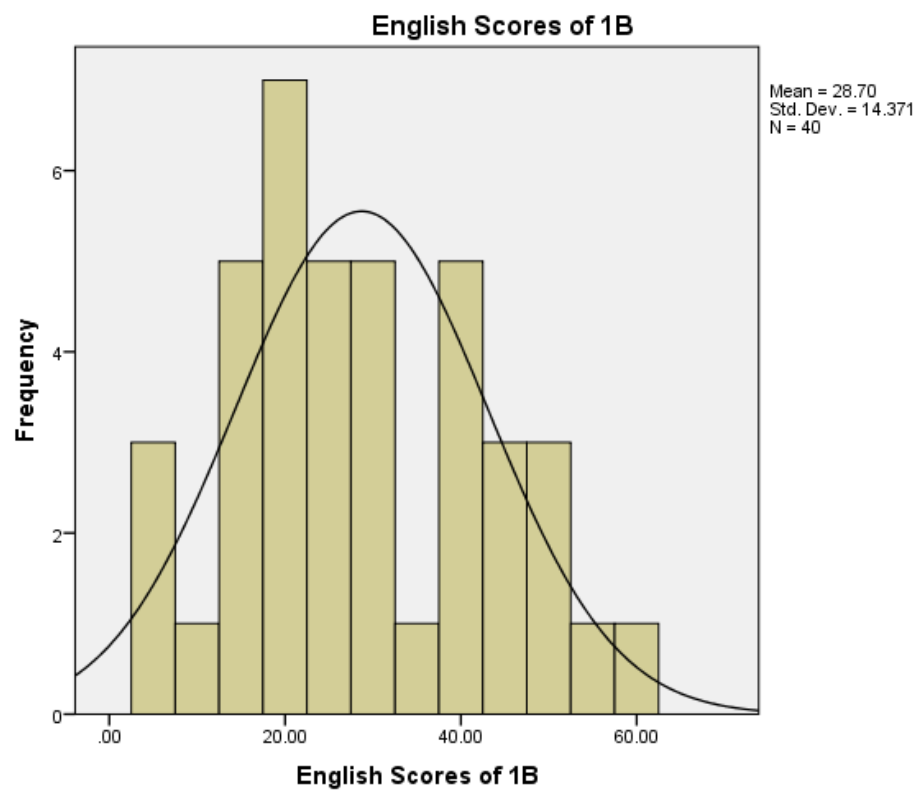
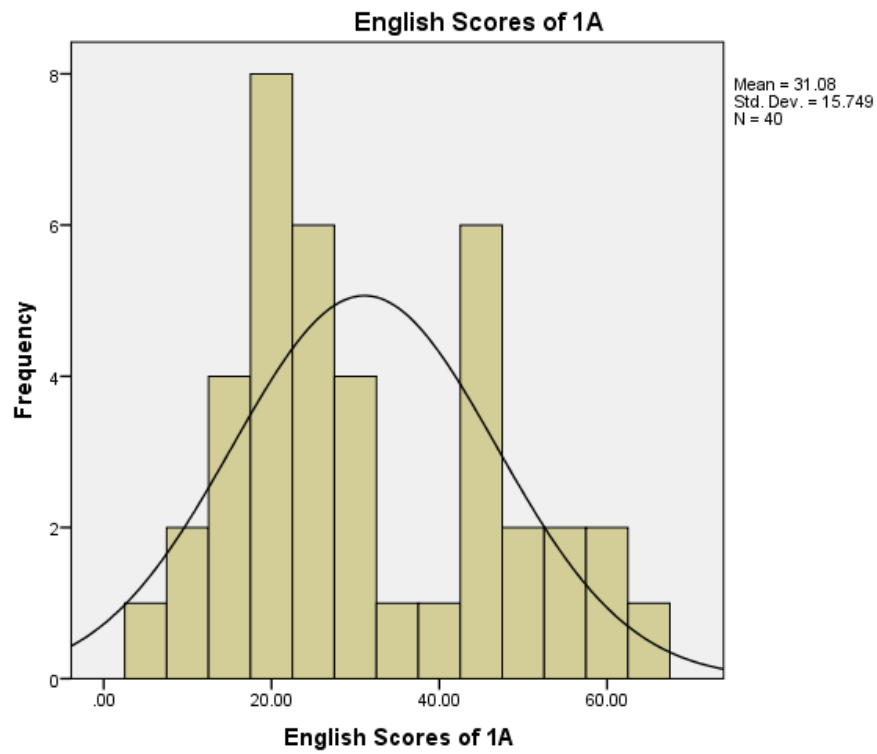
	Basic Science Scores of 1B
N	40
Valid	40
Missing	0
Mean	34.7500
Std. Deviation	14.74875
Minimum	8.00
Maximum	58.00

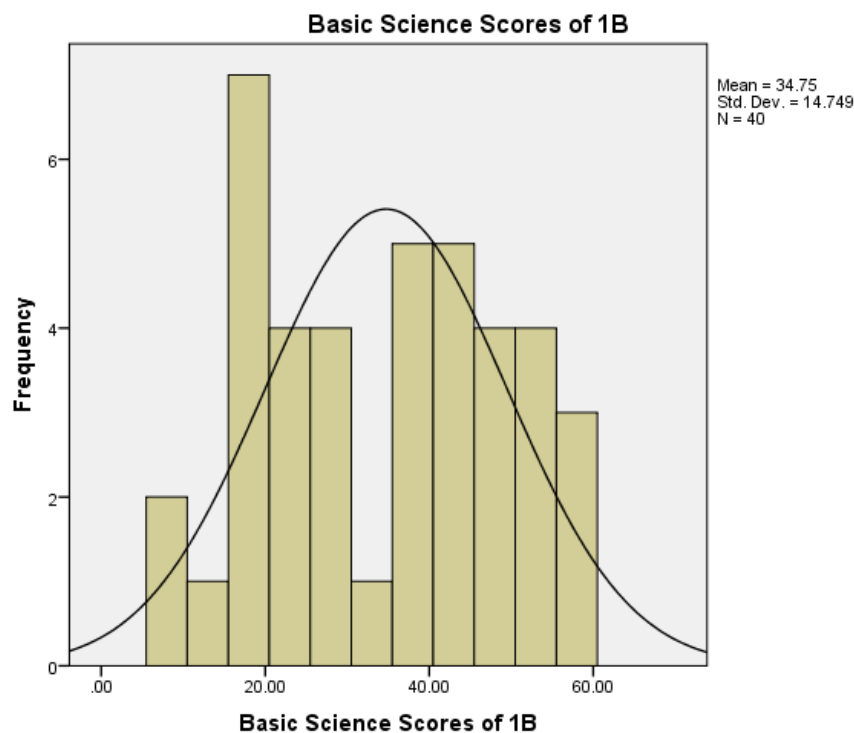
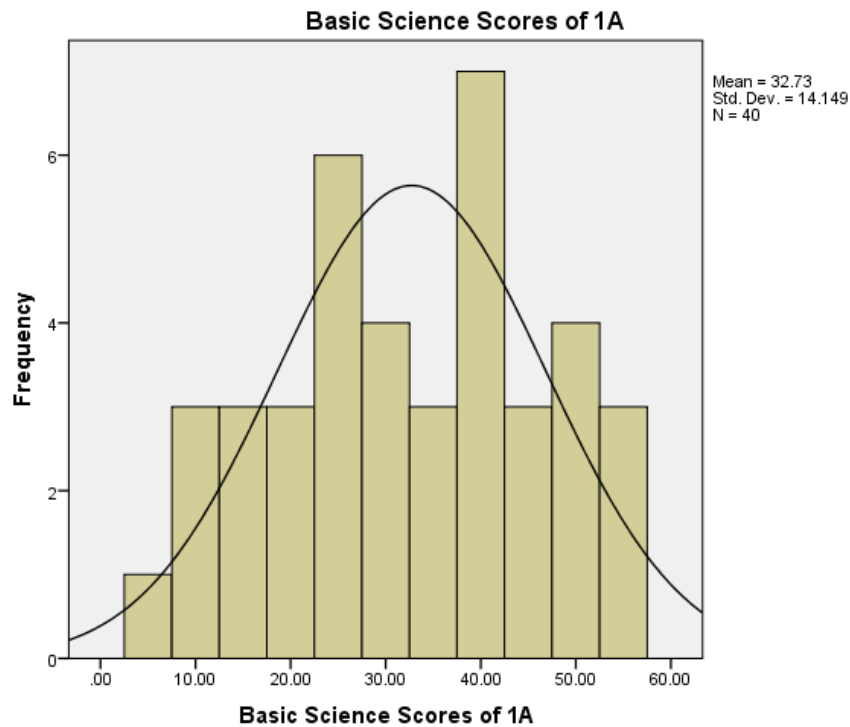
Table 1: Results of pre-treatment of subjects in Mathematics, English and Basic science in both classes A & B

Table 1 above shows the descriptive statistics for the pre-treatment tests given to the pupils. It shows that class 1A has a mean value of 24.275 and standard deviation of 13.715 in Mathematics, mean value of 31.075 and standard deviation of 15.749 in English and a mean value of 32.725, standard deviation of 14.149 in Basic Science. Class 1B has mean values of 22.950, 28.700 and 34.750 with SD of 13.555, 14.371 and 14.748 in Mathematics, English and Basic Science respectively. Therefore, the result indicates that the pupils' performances are almost the same with no much difference in their mean values and spread of the scores. Both classes A & B performed poorly. It can be concluded that the pupils were not properly taught. The charts below further explain the outcome of the results.

Histogram







Changing Practices, Changing Education: A way forward?

Nigeria's Education System has witnessed a plethora of efforts to deal with the complexities emanating from the fall of its educational standard by comparison to the world standard

average. After the decline in the country's educational practices, efforts from both within and outside support by the international development partners stood firm in averting the peril which unfortunately will take a miracle to regain its lost glory because of the lackadaisical attitude of the Government towards Education. Several researchers have made tremendous input and attempted in addressing the scourge through their findings: Garba, (2012), Okunlola & Obadare, (2016), Odia & Omofonmwan, (2007), The guardian Newspaper, (2018), Tete & Matthew, (2020) and host of others all called for active involvement of Government and private partners to participate in solving the problems of Education in Nigeria.

However, despite the giant strides taken to revitalize the education sector in Nigeria since independence in 1960, the country after 65years still lags behind her peers in many areas recording lower than prescribed world standards in education. Her literacy level is now put at 59.6%. There were several efforts to revitalize the standard of Education in the country, funds are always expended to correct the anomalies of our educational misfit, Teachers are trained and retrained, seminars and conferences are always on the run, but still to no avail. Time has come when we have to put our heads together to salvage our Education system from total collapse by innovating ways and means possible to change the Education practices. While the Nation on its own part, must make funding of research and innovations a necessity and producing the innovative products for the citizen's consumption, the educationists and other well-meaning Nigerians must find a way to participate in solving the dreaded educational melt-down.

MCI as a concept is one of such innovative ideas that is put to test to ascertain its workability as one of the ways to address the challenges of the fallen standard of education in Kano and by extension, in the country. It is conceived as a way to address the issue of substandard and poor quality of teaching-learning in Kano by taking action through voluntary participation and sacrifice of seasoned teachers, administrators and philanthropists who can shoulder the responsibility of providing little income for the volunteers who have the ability and not the availability of fund to participate in their own schools within their community.

Conclusion

The dearth of qualified teachers and teaching resources, the emergence of certificate-hungry, empty-headed graduates, the surge in unqualified workforce in many sectors of Nigeria's public and private organizations, the pitfall of the current and most disastrous cankerworm of Nigeria's fabric which is corruption, the underfunding and under budgeting of educational sector and many challenges that hinders proper educational development in Nigeria calls for all hands to be on deck to salvage the situation. Innovative ideas like the MCI concept will help tremendously in providing lasting solutions as other measures previously taken proved unsuccessful.

The paper discussed the MCI (my class and I) concept as one of the ways to solve the problems of educational decline in Kano state. It is based on a longitudinal study which will take six years to mature fully, but within the six years, if progress is recorded, the concept will be fully

accepted and put to work by other like-minds who are disturbed about the current educational predicament in Kano and Nigeria at large.

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