
Effect of School Quality Factors on Students Academic Performance in Social Studies in Delta State- Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was designed to find out the academic achievement of students in Social Studies based on school qualities in Delta State. The co-relational design was employed for this study; it is design that sought to find out how or more variables are related. A standardized instrument in form of a checklist constructed by Nwakobi (1990) for a similar study was modified & adopted for this study. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the split half reliability test. The study population consisted of all the 277 public junior Secondary Schools in Delta State out of which students from six were sampled.

Among the most important items to sum up the quality of schools which researchers have dwelt upon are the quality of the teaching staff, class size, infrastructural facilities, the library and laboratory.

According to Adeogun (2001), lack of building especially where specialist courses are run creates a lot of handicap to effective school work and development.

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School quality is one of the most influential factors affecting performance in IQ test in Delta State and the individual differences are considerably blanketed by it. Ogunnowo (2002), retested 865 students, who, three years earlier, had been tested before they entered different types of secondary schools. He found that the mean IQ changes ranged from + 16.9 in the best school to - 5.5 in the poorest schools. It can thus be concluded that the testee's score in intelligence test was influenced by the quality of the school he attended.

According to Adeogun (2001), the attitude of students towards learning can be traced to the type of learning environment to which they were exposed. There are research evidences to illustrate that the learning environment might be more important in determining students' attitudes toward the science than the type of science course being taught. Such findings portray the idea that the learning environment does influence effective responses. Oduke (2002) also demonstrated that even the setting location in class is a physical variable that is linked to differences in school achievement and the classroom environment can affect non-achievement behaviours and attitudes. High schools with thick population could result in dissatisfaction, decreased social interaction and increase aggression. The implication is that it is possible that more positive attitudes and behaviors may eventually result in improved academic achievement.

Quality of Teaching Staff

There is a significant association between the number of years in teaching and pupils' academic growth. This is supported by Ayodele (2002) in a research carried out which showed that the reading scores of students taught by teachers of six years of experiences and above were significantly higher than those taught by teachers of five years of teaching experiences and less. This positive attitude to student is bound to raise their academic performance. Akinlaye (1996) further propounded the need to employ teaching strategies and well qualified teachers that would enable the learner develop critical thinking process geared towards solving mankind's problems as the most challenging role of education is to equip pupils with the ability and tenacity to deal successfully with fast dynamic world and the unknown future. According to him, the decline in achievement in Christian Religious Studies was due to their weak background in the subject. Since, the teachers in Christian Religious Studies were less likely to set minimum academic standard for students to pass their JSSC exam. In addition, when teachers utilize guided inquiry for the teaching of the sciences, their students are more likely to achieve higher than those of their counterparts who use either written inquiry with written feedback or written inquiry without feedback.

Ola (2002) also agreed that the teacher's knowledge of a subject affects the achievement of his students in the subject.

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Voelker and Haris (1971) stated that learning and understanding of concepts (to be taught) were best achieved when concept attainment was considered in relation to the principles that guided learning. By implication, the teachers of Social Studies should employ instructional strategies that could be effectively used in learning a particular concept.

The materials so far reviewed have shown five teacher characteristics that might contribute to improvement in science achievement and attitude. These are the knowledge of subject matter and teaching methods, experience, attitude toward science and professional self-improvement. Duty consciousness is another item that helps to determine the quality of a teacher.

Adeolu (2002) found that a major variable that had significant relationship to student achievement was teacher absenteeism. According to him, the attitudes of teachers toward students were a significant variable in the achievement of students. All the literatures have positively shown that staff in a school would affect the academic achievement of students in that school. It is anticipated that the inclusion of this variable within the school quality factors would strengthen the overall coefficient for this research.

School Plant: Building, Furniture, Office Routine, Rules & Regulations

According to Olutola (2002) school plant is a term that includes the site, building and the equipment. They are regarded as part of the most essential tools designed to facilitate the educational programmes. According to him, the environment of a College affects students since it can help or hinder, inspire or inhibit. He also stressed that the provision of desks and seats, chalkboards, teaching aids and cupboard is part of the ingredients for effective learning. Thus, the quality of school building and equipment in a school can affect the academic achievement of students. This explained why Nosiri, Ezeocha, Eferakeya (1990) stated that school plant in modern recognition does not stop at only the building and equipment, it includes the football fields, lawns, swimming pools, school gardens, food canteen etc.

Still Ekpo (1989) in his studies included electrically manipulated gadgets, light and sound equipment as determinants of a good school, which have played significant roles in portraying school as the basic tool for the transmission of knowledge from one age to another. In the view of Olagboye (1998), school equipment should be of good quality and be sufficiently available at all time. To function well, every school would need a wide range of equipment, such as textbooks, stationeries, laboratory, chemicals and materials, workshop, equipment audio-visual materials and comfortable furniture.

. These arguments are plain facts for an institution that is essentially lacking in them cannot reasonably expect to achieve its main objectives. Thus, the quality of

school building and equipment in a school can affect the academic achievement of students.

Class Size

One of the major arguments for the failing standard of education arises from the poor quality of human and physical resources that are available in schools. As the student population swells without a corresponding increase in school facilities and teaching staff, the result is often over-crowded classrooms. According to Oduke (2002), the internal migration of families from rural to urban in developing countries like Nigeria cause a remarkable drop in population in the rural area and an increase in the urban area. In such situations, there will be under-utilization of rural schools and over utilization of urban schools. They will undoubtedly influence the academic life in the school, and hence the achievement of students.

The impact of relative class-size on academic performance has been a source of controversy for a long time. According to Kelly (2003), this heightened by recent studies indicating an overall decline in academic performance by secondary level students. He noted that while evidence on this question has been somewhat mixed, recent critique of past researches and of other more carefully refined studies indicate that over-crowded classroom is a unique facto for the falling standard of education. The result indicates that differences in the quality of schools, size of classes, scholastic ability, sex of classmates and ability of teachers have significant effect on academic achievement.

Statement of Problem

There is evidence of poor academic performance of students in secondary schools in Delta State. The Problem of this investigation was to determine whether the status of school quality was a variable that could contribute to this poor performance. In spite of general acknowledgement that environmental factors exert considerable influence on a child's school progress. Very little research has been carried out in Delta state to determine the aspects of the environment that are most influential and which aspects are relatively unimportant. Thus, concern is the way both human and physical resources are allocated amongst the schools. To ensure successful investigation there is need to provide answer to the following question and the hypothesis tested.

Research Question/Hypothesis

The following research question/hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. What is the effect of school quality on the academic achievement of students in Social Studies?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in student's achievement in Social Studies from high and low school qualities. (Schools with appreciable quality of staff, school plant and class size are categorized as high quality while schools with poor quality of staff, school plant and class size are categorized as low quality

Methodology

Population Sample

The population of this study consisted of the 277 public secondary schools in Delta State out of which six secondary schools which constituted subjects for this correlational study were sampled using the random sampling technique. First was to randomly sample the local government areas from the three senatorial districts. The second level was to sample two schools each from the local government areas,

Instrumentation

The data required were obtained from ministry of Education Asaba, (Planning and Statistics Division) as well as using questionnaire. Instrument constructed and used in a similar study by Nwakobi (1993) was modified and used for the study. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the split half reliability test. The two sets of score were correlated using the Pearson's product moment correlated coefficient R . A correlation coefficient of 0.76 was obtained; thus indicating that the instrument was reliable. The instrument was validated by experts in Educational planning, faculty of Education, Delta State University Abraka.

Method of Data Analysis

The results of all the JSS III students from the schools used were involved. The statistical tool used for the analysis of data was the t-test for difference between two independent means. The hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Analysis of Data

HO₁ - there is no significant difference in the achievement of students in Social Studies from school with high and low qualities.

Table I: Showing Data Obtained from the 6 Schools Used

| Schools | % Pass Social Studies | Item 5 Scores [10 mks) | Item 6 Scores (20 mks} | Item 7 Scores [20 mks) | Item 8 Scores [4 mks) | Item 9 Scores (4 mks) | Item 10 Scores [4 mks) | Total (62 mks) |
|---------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| 1 | 60.67 | 9 | 17 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 40 |
| 2 | 78.00 | 5 | 8 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 29 |
| 3 | 94.00 | 10 | 18 | 14 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 50 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|---|----|----|---|---|---|----|
| 4 | 11.11 | 5 | 9 | 12 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 28 |
| 5 | 79.49 | 4 | 10 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 30 |
| 6 | 62.50 | 9 | 15 | 18 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 47 |

Table II: Shows Summary of Table I Above

| Schools | % Pass in Social Studies | Scores on Facilities | Quality |
|---------|--------------------------|----------------------|---------|
| 1 | 60.67 | 40 | High |
| 2 | 78.00 | 29 | Low |
| 3 | 94.00 | 50 | High |
| 4 | 11.11 | 28 | Low |
| 5 | 79.49 | 30 | Low |
| 6 | 62.50 | 47 | High |

Using the t-test method of analysis $t = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{D_1^2 d_1^2}}$

Table III: Showing the T - Test Computation of the Significant Difference in the Achievement of Students in Social Studies from Schools with High and Low Qualities

| N ₁ | X ₁ | d ₁ | D ₁ ² | | N ₁ | X ₁ | D ₁ | D ₁ ² |
|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | 60.67 | 11.53 | 132.90 | | 1 | 60.67 | 11.53 | 132.90 |
| 2 | 94.00 | 21.80 | 475.24 | | 2 | 94.00 | 21.80 | 475.24 |
| 3 | 62.50 | 9.7 | 94.09 | | 3 | 62.50 | 9.7 | 94.09 |
| | | Σd ₁ ² | 702.23 | | | | Σd ₁ ² | 702.23 |

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$$\bar{X}_1 = \frac{x_1}{n} = \frac{60.67 + 94.00 + 62.60}{3} = 72.2$$

$$\bar{X}_2 = \frac{x_2}{N} = \frac{78.00 + 11.11 + 79.49}{3} = 56.2$$

$n = 3$; $n(n-1) = 3(3-1) = 3(2) = 6$
 $\therefore \bar{X}_1 = 72.2$ $\bar{X}_2 = 56.2$

$$\sum d_1^2 = 702.23 \quad \sum d_2^2 = 3048.94$$

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum d_1^2 + \sum d_2^2}{n}}} = \frac{72.20 - 56.20}{\sqrt{\frac{702.23 + 3048.94}{6}}} = \frac{16}{\sqrt{625.195}} = \frac{16}{25.003} = 0.64$$

Interpretation of Results

From the results, the H0s which states there is no significant difference in the achievement of students in Social Studies from schools with high and low school qualities is therefore not rejected. This means there is no significant difference between students from high and low school's quality.

Discussion of Findings

This study was undertaken to find out the influence of the qualities of the school which students attend on their academic performance. It evolved from an interest to examine some of the non-genetic factors that are associated with academic performance. The following hypothesis was formulated and tested:-

1. There is no significant difference in the achievement of students in Social Studies from schools with high and low qualities.
2. The result of the data analysis led to non-rejection of the hypothesis. The Null hypothesis was not rejected because the t-test method of data analysis gave result of 0.64 while the t-test table value of 0.05 level of significance and a difference of four was 3.78; showing there is no significant difference existing between students of schools with high and low quality in Social Studies.

Conclusion/Recommendations

On the basis of the findings drawn from the analysis of data in this study, it was concluded that:

There is no relationship between the qualities of schools which students attend and their academic performance in Social Studies. Also, the good effects of teacher qualification and experience in teaching and dedication to duty, on student's academic achievement in Social Studies cannot be inhibited by the quality of the school plants in the project.

In the period of oil boom in Nigeria, the relative rate of economic growth and rapid social change accelerated. The demand for educational opportunities since the rapid growth in public revenues and personal incomes made it possible to meet this demand. This led to the proliferation of secondary schools in Delta State without thought for the present economic doom.

The present situation has undoubtedly given rise to hundreds of low quality schools. The system now finds it difficult to function well under the present severe constraint. Although in this research, result showed no significant difference between students of low and high qualities schools, yet it is important to include in this discussion, that to avoid the awful situation of proliferation of low quality schools in the future, there is need to base expansion of the secondary school system on research findings rather than political motivations. The changes should take a very gradual form to prevent the whole system from total collapse in period of economic adversity.

To raise the qualities of our schools, the government agencies and especially educational planners should ensure that both human and physical resources, qualified teaching staff, facilities, equipment, furniture and the like are equitably distributed to schools. This may carry along with it the provision of various incentives to qualified staff who agree to teach in the rural areas. Such teachers should be provided with all instructional materials required of quality schools to enhance their efficiency.

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