Correlation Analysis of Students' Attendance and academic Achievement in Federal Unity Colleges in South-West Nigerian

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Abstract

Stakeholders in education are disturbed about the rate of students' attendance in secondary schools and agreed that it was one of the major factors influencing the students' academic achievement. This study tried to find out how students' attendance correlate with the academic achievement in a Federal Unity Colleges in Southwest, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling procedure was employed to collect data. Purposive sampling strategy was used to select two Co-educational Federal Unity Colleges in five States in Southwest, Nigeria (Osun, Ogun, Ekiti, Lagos and Ondo States). Intact class was used to select SS II Economics students in the selected Sates. Three research questions were answered with instruments used in the study and Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to analysis it. Results revealed that there was negative and strong relationship between students' age and school attendance (r=-0.18 p< 0.05) in Federal Unity Colleges In addition, the result revealed that there is negative relationship between students' gender and students' class attendance (r= -0.12, p< 0.05). Furthermore the result revealed that there was strong positive relationship between achievement in Economics and students' attendance to school (r= 0.79, p<0.05). It was recommended that students' control committee should be more strengthened to reduce rate of absenteeism in the classrooms. Also, installment payment of school fees should be introduced so as to reduce students' late resumption to schools while subject teachers should give assignments to students regularly, mark and give feedback to promote students' attendance in schools.

Key words: Students' attendance, Absenteeism, Achievement in Economics.

Introduction

The development of any society is a function of the quality of education received by the citizens and the type of leadership structure put in place. The accurate system of education and the programmes put in place will serve as catalysts towards economic development of a nation. It is absorbed that the academic achievement of students is fluctuation as reflected in the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) and the National Examinations Council (NECO). This trend has given a great concern to stakeholders in Education. Experience shows that the rate at which students attend classes and school activities goes a long way in determining the academic success. Thus, punctuality of students in the school and other school related activities are very crucial in determining the overall academic achievement of students.

Students' punctuality in any school system is very important for any meaningful teaching-learning process to take place. Rodgers (2011), Bratti and Staolani (2012) opined that students' attendance is very imminent in improving students' academic achievement. Hence, there is need for high degree of students' punctuality in secondary schools. Classroom instruction and dissemination of information by teachers will be meaningless without adequate number of students' present in the classroom. In fact, students are more likely to succeed in their academic endeavours when they attend schools regularly and consistently. Logically, it may be difficult for teachers and students to build skills and progress if the major percentate of students are frequently absent in school or class. Thus, apart from failing in academics activities, they are likely to get into trouble outside the school environment.

It is crucial for any student to attend school promptly, regularly and arriving on time in order to help prepare the student for real world of life . In fact, truancy or incessant late-coming to the school and class by students signifies that important instructions are missed and the class interrupted. Essentially, a student that rushes to the classroom, may not be able to settle down very well for lesson for at least the first five minutes of the class. Students need to arrive on time, settle down and ready for the daily school activities. Experience alludes that students that arrive at least five minutes before the first bell is rung in the school, will not have time to interact with fellow peers and teachers. Hence, they will be able to get themselves ready for their busy day activities.

Patrick (2010) emphasises that a student that is not regular in school, may face learning challenges, resulting from late-coming to school, truancy, inability to read and not consulting with the teacher. Hence, he asserted that there is fairly positive correlation between attendance and academic performance of secondary school students. Also, when a student continuously comes late to class, other students in the class are distracted. Attention is drawn away from the teacher or task at hand and toward the child who has just arrived. Most often,

classmates may begin to criticise this child which may have negative peer interaction and inability to concentrate very well in the classroom.

Attendance register was introduced in an attempt to assertain to the presence of students in the school and classrooms. Students' attendance is an important administrative document/record, used by the school authority to monitor, control and supervise students' activities in schools. Therefore, a school is set up for the main purpose of bringing students from different families together under one roof and impact positive knowledge, attitude and skills so as to become productive future leaders. In addition, effective teaching and learning cannot take place without the coming together of the teacher and students. In other to check students' commitment to receiving instruction from the teacher, an administrative record is designed and used on daily basis, i.e. the attendance register. This record is utilised by the teachers and supervised on weekly basis by the school head (Onamiroro, 2010).

Literatures reveal that there is a great positive relationship between students' attendance in schools activities and academic achievement in universal primary education (Naluwemba, 2020) It was further pointed out that students' school attendance is one of important factors that influence academic achievement (Epstein and Sheldon, 2012). Similarly, Fleming (2008) proposes that learners need regular school attendance for them to be highly engaged with classroom activities. Black (2014) argues that students' school attendance can be improved through constant and continuous teacher guidance plus parental motivation and encouragement. In fact, it is crucial for school teachers to maintain and keep regular and daily learners' attendance record promptly, in order to forestall mishap (Bagaya, 2019).

School enrolment alone cannot guarantee educational quality and equity, especially where school attendance is low. With low school attendance, learners can hardly catch up with class work particularly where teachers do not have adequate time to engage absentee-learners in academic activity (Bagaya, 2019). Chronic absentee-pupils may lack time to concentrate on their studies because such pupils often get involved in out-of-school programmes (Gottfried, 2009). Ford and Sutphen (2016) observe that without regular school attendance, learning achievement and growth will stifle. Irregular attendance school attendance renders all global and national efforts towards universalization of education unproductive. school access and regular attendance, satisfactory progress and completion are variables that make a significant impact on educational achievement (Thapa, 2013). Connolly and Olson (2012) further observes that absenteeism relates with future negative learning outcomes such as slower progression and lower achievement in later years. The views of Connolly and Olson are similar to those of Balfanz and Byrnes (2012) who argued that school attendance can influence academic outcome throughout a student's school life.

Furthermore, it has been observed that the students' gender does influence attendance rate in the school and classrooms. Experience reveal that most of the domestic activities at home are carried out by female children which indirectly affecting their attendance, punctuality and academic achievement in classrooms. Cortright (2011) submits that regular attendance has influence on the examination success of students. He argued that students' gender influences the academic achievement of students as male students perform better than female due to attendant rate in the classroom that is in favour of male students. However, Eisen (2015) found different results where the study indicated that there is no statistically significant relationship between class attendance and academic performance by adjusting the control variables which includes gender and ages. More importantly, literatures reveal that students' attendance is one of the key factors determining academic achievement of students at tertiary level. Most students that do not attend classes regularly fail in examinations.

Despite various policies and measures introduced by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) in Federal Unity Colleges, in order to improve students' academic achievement, it is still fluctuating over the years especially in West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE). Considering the huge investment in these Colleges, it gives a great concern to stakeholders in education on what really courses the dwindling in students' academic achievement over years in Federal Unity Colleges in South-West, Nigeria. Hence, this study investigated the relationship between students' attendance in school and academic achievement in Federal Unity Colleges, South-West, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. Does students' age influence attendance in School?
2. Does students' gender influence the attendance in school?
3. What is the relationship between students' attendance and academic achievement in Economics?

The study adopted non-experimental design of correlational type. The population comprised all senior secondary school (SS II) Economics students in Southwest, Nigeria. Multi-stages sampling procedure was used in the study. Purposive sampling

strategy was employed to select two Co-educational Federal Unity Colleges in five states in the Southwest (Osun, Ogun, Ekiti, Lagos and Ondo States). Intact class was used to select 730 Economics SS II students and 72 Economics teachers in the selected states. Three research questions were answered with three instruments, used to collect the data and were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

Results

Research Question One: Does student' age influence attendance in school?

Table 1 Correlation between Students age and Attendance in school

Variables	No	R	P	Remark
Students' Age	1560			
Students Attendance in School	1560	-0.18	0 .00	Significant

The result reveal that there was negative and low relationship between students' age and school attendance (r= -0.18 p< 0.05) in Federal Unity Colleges, Nigeria. It was also observed that it has no really a direct influence on students' academic achievement in Economic. Experiences show that most of parents are not really follow the government age regulation or limit before taken their wards to schools. It is quite disturbing that at aged two child often start schooling. Hence, most students develop one illness or the other in order not to go to school.

Research Question Two: Does students' gender influence attendance in school?

Table 2: Correlation between Students' gender and Attendance in School.

Variables	No	R	P	Remark
Students' gender	1560			
Attendance in School	1560	-0.12	0 .00	Significant

The result revealed that there is negative relationship between students' gender and students' class attendance (r= -0.12, p< 0.05). This is not in line with Romer (2003) in his study that gender is crucial factor in analysing class attendance problems and academic achievement in Social Studies where attendance of male is more than female. Also, Black et al (2014) argue that school attendance is reinforced through continuous teacher, guidance and parent encouragement.

Research Question Three: What is the relationship between students' attendance and academic achievement?

Table 3: Correlation between Students Attendance and Academic Achievement in Economics

Variables	No	R	P	Remark
Students ' Attendance	1560			
Students achievement. In Economics	1560	0.79	0 .00	Significant

The result revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between achievement in Economics and students' attendance to school (r= 0.79, p<0.05). This finding is in support of Frederick, Sempala and Naluwemba (2020) that submit in their study that there is a positive relationship between school attendance and academic achievement in universal primary education. It is also in line with the assertion of Gottfried (2010) where he established that the relationship between school attendance and academic achievement improves on a daily or regular basis when learners participate in school activities. He further ascertains that the number of days learners attend school activities have significant positive relationship with students' academic achievement in both elementary and middle schools. However, the result is in contrary to the findings of Lucas (2006) where he finds that there is smaller relationship but statistically significant between students' attendance and academic achievement in Micro-economics.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study reveals that there is positive and strong relationship between students' age and school attendance. Most underage students attach no real importance to schooling and see no immediate benefits from it. Also, it further reveals that

significant relationship exists between students' gender and attendance in schools' activities. In addition, the study finds out that there is strong positive relationship between the students' attendance and academic achievement. It is thus recommended from this study, that:

1. Pre-tests/assignments should be done during the first week of resumption to engineer to quick resumption of students to schools.
2. Students should be given opportunity to pay their school fees on installment to enable some students that cannot afford to pay at once, resume early due to economic situation in the country.
3. Students' control or monitor committee should be set up wake up to their responsibility. Furthermore, certain mark percentage should be allocated to attendance as part of their continuous assessment.

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