INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL LOCATION ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN SOCIAL STUDIES IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This paper examined the influence of school location on students' academic achievement in Social Studies in Colleges of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria. The research design adopted for this study was the Ex-post facto design. The population of this study was made up of students in the College of Education Akamkpa and the Federal College of Education Obudu offering Social Studies in the 2016/2017 academic session, totaling one thousand, three hundred and forty three students (1,343); out of which seven hundred and fifty-three students were sampled for the study. The main instruments used for data collection were: a School Location Questionnaire (SLQ) and a Social Studies Achievement Test (SOSAT). Split-half method of reliability was used to determine the reliability estimate of the instruments. Data analysis technique adopted was the independent t-test. The result indicated that, school location has no significant influence on students' academic achievement in Social Studies. Based on the finding, even though the finding shows that school location has no effect, but I still recommended that Government and all relevant stakeholders should brace up and urgently bridge the gap between rural and urban areas in terms of infrastructural amenities including well-equipped schools, be it adequate staffing with qualified and well-motivated personnel and standard physical facilities, in order to encourage a sustained high academic achievement in Social Studies students notwithstanding the locations of their schools.

Keywords: School location Social Studies, academic achievement, colleges of education.

Introduction

Schools are located variously, some in the urban while others are in the rural areas. It is observed that schools located in the urban areas tend to have more facilities, manpower, government attention, etc. as against those located in the rural areas. It is on this note that the researcher wants to find out if students in the urban schools perform better than their counterparts in the rural areas. According to Ekpen (2010), Social Studies inculcates in the individual the ability to cope with various life situations. Mcfarland (2004) and the Board of Directors of National Council for Social Studies (2004) saw Social Studies as an integral study of Social Sciences and humanities aimed at promoting effective citizenry and civilization.

Maka (2009) reported that Social Studies has been designed to teach skills for effective living in the society. Joof (2001), Joof (1991) maintained that Social Studies is concerned with wide dissemination of information, the development of Social and enquiry skills and the improvement of Social attitudes and behaviour. This assists students in developing intelligent, responsible and self-directing citizens and favourable attitude towards the appreciation of basic Nigerian beliefs and values, contributions of individuals and groups to the Nigerian cultural heritage, other races, religions and languages. Esu and Ntukidem (2003) also maintained that Social Studies makes it easier for an individual to adjust and live happily in any environment in which he finds himself.

Ogunwale (1989) identified two types of factors capable of influencing students' academic achievement as phenotypic and organismic factors. According to him, the phenotypic factors are mainly social which include the home, the school, parental influence, the interactive effects of the students and materials as well as socio-economic status of parents.

In recent times, educators in Nigeria have been increasingly concerned about the need to improve on the academic achievement of students (Akubuiro, 2008). In the same vein, Akomolafe (2009) asserted that parents, teachers and society in general are worried and apprehensive about the best way to improve academic standards, achievement and performances. Moreso, Soyinka (1999) observed that the university system in Nigeria needs restructuring. He further stated that, academic standard has fallen drastically and the quality of graduates produced is subject to re-examination.

The researcher was motivated to carry out this study as a consequence of the assertions made by Soyinka, Akubuiro, Akomolafe and his untested personal experiences and observations in the classrooms as a Social Studies teacher in secondary schools in Cross River State between 1995 and 2007, where he observed that the results of the Junior Secondary School Certificate Examinations in Social Studies was not encouraging. It is this poor

achievement experienced in the classrooms by the researcher that gingered the researcher to carry out the present study which sought to ascertain the influence of school location on students' academic achievement in Social Studies in Colleges of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Academic achievement is an important parameter in measuring success in students. Observations and reports have shown that success or high academic achievement has become a Herculean task to accomplish by students in recent times. Students' poor performances in Social Studies in Cross River State has continued to pose a serious concern to government agencies, parents and the students themselves (Essien 2004; Akpan 2006 & Usoro 2007). Most studies in the past such as (Maynard, 1971; & Onyejiaku, 1991) had tended to attribute this problem to factors that are extraneous to the learner, such as poor physical facilities, school environment.

Literature review

School location refers to where a given school is situated. It could be in an urban or rural area. A lot of researches had been carried out in respect to school locations and some hold the view that location influences the academic achievement of students in such a school.

Ella and Ita (2017) conducted a study to determine the correlational relationship between school location and students' academic performances in English language in secondary schools in Ogoja Local Government Area. It adopted a survey research design. The population of the study comprised all the 836 senior secondary two (SS2) students of the 2016/17 academic session in all the 46 public and private secondary schools in Ogoja Local Government Area. Through stratified random sampling, a sample of two hundred (200) students was drawn for the study. Out of this number, 124 representing 62% were males; while 76 students representing 38% were females. The instrument used for data collection was achievement test tagged English Language Achievement Test (ELAT) carved from 2015

English Language Mock Examination in Calabar Education zone. The data obtained was analysed using independent t-test. The results revealed that there is a significant difference in students' academic performance in English language on the basis of school location.

Similarly, Onoyase (2015) carried out a study on the academic performance of students in urban, semi-urban and rural secondary school in Oshimili South Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. A survey design was employed in the study. Five hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The researcher collected data on the Senior Schools Certificate Examination results conducted by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) in the year 2001. The subjects selected for analysis were English Language, mathematics and biology. The others were chemistry and geography. Three out of six secondary schools in the study area were used for the study. Ninety out of two hundred and twenty students in the three secondary schools were used for the study representing 49.1 percent. One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the data. The study showed that; there was a significant difference in the academic performances among students in urban, semi-urban and rural secondary schools in Economics, Government, History, Civic and Geography.

Ojoawo (2006) studied the effects of differential distribution of resources on schools performances in examinations and found that location of schools in Oyo State had significant effect on schools academic performances and there was significant difference in the performances between the students of rural and urban schools.

Undoubtedly, it could be argued that since some of the test developers are teachers usually drawn from well established urban schools in addition to those in the employ of the relevant ministries and examining bodies, it is obvious that the items making up the tests are bound to be drawn to reflect the interest of the norm group to the detriment of those in the rural areas. Besides, the urban people benefit from facilities such as: basic electricity, pipe borne

water, good road networks, film shows, television, radio and the frequent interactions with other tribes.

Eraikhuemen (2014) studied the influence of gender and school locations on Mathematics achievement of Senior Secondary School II students in Edo State. A sample of four hundred and three (403) students randomly selected from twelve (12) schools in four (4) Local Government Areas and sixty (60) items, Government Achievement Test (GAT) was used. Data collected were analysed using a 2x2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and tested at .05 level of significance. The result indicated that, there is a significant difference in the academic achievement of urban and rural students. Based on the findings, it was concluded that urban schools perform academically better than rural schools in Senior Secondary School Government Examinations in Edo State. The difference in performances may be because urban environment is more conducive than the rural area.

In a related study, Chianson (2014) carried out a study on school location as a correlate of Geography students' achievement in a cooperating learning class. The population of the study was made up of 174 SS2 students in government co-educational secondary schools in Benue State. The research design adopted was a quasi experimental design. The objective of the study was to find out the relationship between the mean academic achievement of urban and rural schools Geography. The mean and standard deviation of academic achievement record was used in answering the research hypothesis and ANOVA was the statistical tool used in testing the hypothesis. The findings of the research revealed that students in urban schools performed academically better than students in rural schools. The difference in performances may be as a result of lack of funds to provide these schools with necessary instructional facilities as well as qualified teachers with knowledge of relevant teaching strategies. The differences as opined by Eraikhuemen (2014) can be as a result of geographical locations of

schools, resources, availability of technology and quality of teachers. The author also identified that low performing youths are mostly found in rural schools.

In a systematic analysis of Adult and non-formal education in Cross River State, Ikashi (2015) compared rural and non-rural students' achievement in 2013 and 2014 in the State Commission for Mass literacy, Adult and non-formal Education (SMEC). The researcher discovered that eight (8th) grade Social Studies assessments showed that while rural and non-rural students had comparable levels of Social Studies achievement in 2013, by 2014 rural students' achievement had begun to outperform their non-rural counterparts. However, the achievements varied considerably from one Local Government to another, with rural students performing better in some Local Governments and significantly poorer in others. The difference could be explained by the variance in a broad range of schooling factors (instructional resources, progressive instructions, professional trainings, safe/orderly environment and collective support). This result may appear this way because the rural has little distractions e.g. noise pollution, low social activities that might act as distractions.

Also, researching on location of school as an influence on students' academic achievement in Geography, Obe (2013) observed a significant difference in urban-rural performances of 480 primary schools finalists and aptitude sub-test of National Common Entrance Examination (NCEE) into Secondary Schools in Cross River State. In his study, tagged 'Scholastic Aptitude Test', the author concluded that pupils from urban schools were superior to their rural counterparts. Ajayi (2009) holds a similar view when in his study on urban and rural academic achievement found out a significant difference in academic achievements of students in urban and rural schools. The author therefore concluded that, the achievement difference must have been borne out of the qualified teachers, conducive learning environment and provision of facilities that are used in urban schools which are absent in the rural schools.

In their contrary views, Cortis and Newmarch, (2000) argued that the city's life characteristics in terms of its corrupt practices, anonymous and impersonal nature, are all distractors from academic works. They submitted that as a result of multitude attractions around cities, the tendency towards a lesser performance among urban students is observed. They explained that the rural populace being particularly farmers, though at subsistence level, transfers such interest and enthusiasm to schools in the entire rural areas. They asserted that the students who may have shown such interest and enthusiasm transform them into practical realities. This assertion coincides with the objectives of agricultural education as contained in the National Curriculum for junior secondary schools. Of interest here is the integration of knowledge with skills and preparation for occupation in agriculture.

Okon (2002) carried out a study on school location and item difficulty in junior secondary three Economics Achievement test in Cross River State. Five hundred (500) subjects were used as sample using stratified sampling procedure. The statistical analysis technique used was t-test for two proportions. The results of the findings revealed that the urban students performed better than those in rural areas.

Eze (1993) also conducted a study with 640 junior secondary three students in sixteen secondary schools consisting of eight rural and eight urban schools on integrated science performances. The results showed that urban students performed better than those in rural schools. Such interest that brings about better performances as reported by Inomiesa (1989) was due to environmental stimulation. It could be argued that students in urban schools are exposed to the modernizing effects of science and technology hence could perform better than students in rural schools that have no such experiences.

Ekpo (1999) in his study on the status of science teaching in Nigerian schools found that there was a general lack of laboratory studio and workshop facilities, the situation being more acute in community owned schools. In another study, Inyang (1988) in her study on

students' performances in integrated science test, found no significant difference in the performances of urban and rural students on the subject. In a study on Resource Distribution in Nigerian Secondary Schools in the Bendel State, Enaoha (1983) compared planning, control and provision of physical resources (teaching and recreational) between urban and rural schools. He found out that, students from urban homes were better provided with relevant teaching resources than their counterparts. He concluded that, rural schools students were worse off in terms of provision of learning materials both at school and their homes, the situation being worsened by their non-cooperating parents who are mostly illiterates.

Nwogu and Ayogu (1999) conducted a study on the influence of school locations on students' achievement in physics. A random sample of 900 SS I, SS II, and SS III physics students was used for the study. Data were analyzed using the 2-way ANOVA. The results indicated significant school location effects on students' physics achievement.

The performances of students in Agricultural Science could largely be attributed to the locations of schools whether the school is in a rural or urban area. In this way, Jegede and Okebukola (1989) asserted that much of the reliable variances to students' performances could be attributed to the learner environment or location of school. They maintained that in urban schools students are said to be exposed to the good learning environments, good methods of teaching and so perform better than those in rural schools.

According to Mousel, Eric, Moser, Lovel, Schacht and Walter (2006), students who may not have been raised in a rural setting but spent considerable time working on a grandparent's or other relatives farm or ranch may have edges over students with no practical farm or ranch experiences in agricultural science. In his view, Diechert (2004) also observed that demographics of enrollment in agricultural science are changing from students with a rural background to an increasing number of students from an urban background with no knowledge

of basic concepts in agricultural science, a situation which often result to poor students' performances in the subject.

Method

The research design adopted for this study was Ex-post facto design. The researcher had no direct control over the independent variables since they have already occurred in the population. The population of this study was made up of students in the College of Education Akamkpa and the Federal College of Education Obudu offering Social Studies in the 2009/2010 academic session, totaling one thousand, three hundred and forty three students (1,343). College of Education Akamkpa had a population of 543 students offering Social Studies according to the academic unit of the institution. A breakdown shows 247 males and 296 females. The Federal College of Education, Obudu has a total population of 800 students offering Social Studies according to the academic unit of the institution, with 325 males and 475 females. The sampling technique adopted for this study was simple random sampling technique. Simple random sampling technique is a means by which researchers give every member of his/her population equal and independent opportunity of being selected. The technique employed by this researcher was the hat and draw (balloting) method. Here the researcher wrote the numbers of all the students in the two institutions offering Social Studies on slip of papers, rolled each slip into a paper ball, mixed those paper balls well in a container (hat) and blindly drew the required number of students. In selecting the sample 60/50% of the total population was drawn for the study. The sample of this study consisted of seven hundred and fifty-three (753) students randomly selected from the 2 tertiary institutions in Cross River State. A breakdown of the figure shows that four hundred and eighty (480) students representing (60%) were selected from Federal College of Education, Obudu; while two hundred and seventy-three (273) students representing (50%) were selected from College of Education, Akamkpa. The main instruments used for data collection were: a Socio-

psychological Factors Questionnaire (SPFQ) and a Social Studies Achievement Test (SOSAT) both designed by the researcher. Two kinds of validities were established for the instrument of this study. These were the face and content validities. Face validity refers to the way the questionnaire items appear to take care of relevant content in the subject area of interest, while the extent to which the instrument represents the content of interest, or how well the items on the instrument represent or sample the content to be measured is the content validity. The face and content validity were established by using experts in measurement and evaluation in the Faculty of Education, University of Calabar and the supervisors. The experts and supervisors certified that, the instrument is face and content valid and could then be used for the study. The face validity was established by giving the items developed by the experts who identified flaws and errors, which were corrected. To determine the reliability of the research instrument (questionnaire) a trial test was done using fifty (50) students drawn from the population area. Split-half method of reliability was used to determine the reliability estimate of the instruments. The instruments were administered once to the respondents to complete, during scoring, two sets of scores were derived (odd and even). The scores derived from the two sets were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and corrected for test length with Spearman Brown Prophecy Formula. The questionnaire and the Social Studies achievement test were administered personally by the researcher with the help of some research assistants (staff of the institutions). Out of seven hundred and sixty-eight copies of both socio-psychological factors questionnaire and Social Studies achievement test administered only seven hundred and fifty-three were properly filled and returned, fifteen were either not returned, uncompleted or poorly filled and were not processed. The instruments were returned on the spot.

Results and Discussions

Hypothesis one:

There is no significant influence of school location on students' academic achievement in Social Studies. The independent variable in this hypothesis is school location; while the dependent variable is academic achievement in Social Studies. To test this hypothesis, the independent t-test was used. This is because we are comparing the mean academic achievement of students in Social Studies in terms of their locations (urban and rural). The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Independent t-test Analysis of the relationship between school location and Academic achievement in Social Studies (N=753)

School location	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	t-value
Urban	440	21.34	1.94	
				1.196
Rural	313	21.18	1.66	

* Significant at .05, critical t = 1.96, df = 751

The result of the analysis as presented in Table 1 revealed that the calculated t-value of 1.196 is less than the critical t-value of 1.962 at .05 levels of significance with 751 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of school location on academic achievement in Social Studies was retained. This result indicated that, school location has no significant influence on students' academic achievement in Social Studies.

Discussion of findings

The result of this hypothesis revealed that there is no significant influence of location on students' academic achievement in Social Studies. The finding of this hypothesis disagrees with the view of Ella and Ita (2017) whose study to determine the correlational relationship between school location and students' academic performances in English language in secondary schools in Ogoja Local Government Area revealed that there is a significant

difference in students' academic performances in English language on the basis of school location. The finding of this study also disagrees with that of Eraikhuemen (2014) whose study on the influence of gender and school location on Mathematics achievement of Senior Secondary School II students in Edo State, indicated that, there is a significant difference in the academic achievement of urban and rural students. And who hinted the difference in performances may be because urban environment is more conducive than the rural area. However, this study's result is extent in consonance with Ikashi (2015) who in a systematic analysis of Adult and non-formal education in Cross River State, compared rural and non-rural students' achievement in 2013 and 2014 in the State Commission for Mass literacy, Adult and non-formal Education (SMEC) and discovered that eight (8th) grade Social Studies assessment showed that while rural and non-rural students had comparable levels of Social Studies achievement in 2013, by 2014 rural students' achievement had begun to outperform their non-rural counterparts. And pointed out that, the achievement varied considerably from one Local Government to another, with rural students performing better in some Local Governments and significantly poorer in others. The researcher further noted that the differences could be explained by the variance in a broad range of schooling factors (instructional resources, progressive instructions, professional training, safe/orderly environment and collective support). And tied the result to the fact that rural areas have little or no distractions e.g. noise pollution, low social activities that might act as distractions. Also, the finding of this study is also partially in agreement with Cortis and Newmarch, (2000) who argued that the city's life characteristics in terms of its corrupt practices, anonymous and impersonal nature, are all distractors from academic work. They submitted that as a result of multitude attractions around cities, the tendency towards a lesser performance among urban students is observed. The authors explained that the rural populace being particularly farmers, though at subsistence level, transfers such interest and enthusiasm to schools in the entire rural areas. And hence,

asserted that the students who may have shown such interest and enthusiasm transform them into practical realities. This assertion coincides with the objectives of agricultural education as contained in the National Curriculum for junior secondary schools.

The finding of this study no doubt, has brought to the fore the fact that not minding where our tertiary institutions are sited, if the raging disparity in our urban and rural secondary schools in terms of staffing, physical facilities, personnel staffing/motivation, etc. is adequately corrected; our students can do well in any tertiary institution notwithstanding the location. There is therefore the urgent need for the needful to be done in order to create a balanced system that will encourage equal opportunities for all our children whether or not they reside in urban centres.

Conclusion

Based on the result of the study, it was concluded that school location does not significantly relate to academic achievement in Social Studies.

Recommendations

Based on the finding, even though the finding shows that school locations has no effect, but I still recommended that Government and all relevant stakeholders should brace up and urgently bridge the gap between rural and urban areas in terms of infrastructural amenities including well-equipped schools, be it adequate staffing with qualified and well-motivated personnel or physical facilities, in order to encourage a sustained high academic achievement of students in Social Studies notwithstanding the location of their schools.

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