

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL AND PERSONAL FACTORS ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UPPER BASIC EDUCATION SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENTS IN ABAKALIKI EDUCATION ZONE, EBONYI STATE

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Abstract

This study examined influence of social and personal factors on the academic performance of upper basic education Social Studies students in Abakaliki Education Zone, Ebonyi State. The study was guided by two purposes of study, two research questions and two hypotheses. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of study was 71 Social Studies teachers in Abakaliki Education Zone and that was used as the sample. The instrument used for the data collection was a questionnaire tagged: 'Questionnaire on Influence of social and personal factors on the academic performance of upper basic education Social Studies students' structured by the researcher. The questionnaire was face validated by three experts: two from Social Studies and one in Measurement and Evaluation in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The reliability of the instrument was determined by trial testing it using 30 teachers from Onueke Education Zone which was outside the area of study. Cronbach Alpha Statistical analysis was used to determine the internal consistency coefficient of the instrument and that yielded the coefficient value of 0.81. This value was considered high enough indicating that the instrument was reliable. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the two research questions, while t-test was used to test the two null- hypotheses at an alpha level of 0.05. Findings of the study include that social factors influence the academic performance of upper basic education Social Studies students in Abakaliki Education Zone; and personal factors influence the academic performance of upper basic education Social Studies students in Abakaliki Education Zone. It was therefore, recommended that: government should provide the necessary factors that are needed in schools to improve learning and promote performance of students in academics, both in internal and external examinations; and the government and school administrators should maintain and monitor the school factors to avoid misuse and punish offenders.

INTRODUCTION

It is widely acknowledged that the quality of teaching and learning in any educational institution is determined by the performance of students. Thus, educational resources are disbursed, innovative instructional strategies used, and educational facilities like desks, chairs, blackboards, dustbins, teaching

aids, typewriters, computers generators, and calculators etc provided in order to improve students' performance. Academic performance is conceptualized as the result or outcome, which show the extent to which learners have accomplished or completed specific goals that were the basis of a given instructional experience or activities. It describes the degree to which students have attained the specified defined educational objectives after they have exposed them carefully to a set of academic activities (Ugwoke, Edeh, Nathaniel and Ezemma). Social and personal factors also constitute integral factors that determine the teaching and learning effectiveness and efficiency in the school. Social factors refer to the non-economic aspects of the environment that influence individuals and groups behavior, shaping social relationships, interactions and institutions (Ehiamekalor, 2001). They include family structure, gender, occupation, marital status, nationality, age etc. Family background is the bedrock of children's psychological development, social relations, moral advancement, and socio-economic attainments. (Ushie, Emeka, Ononga & Owolabi, 2012). Ajila and Olutola (2009) concur with Ushie when they note that the home has a great influence on the child's psychological, emotional, social and economic state. Inadequacy of social factors has led to the contention that many students fail to develop their potentials, thereby influencing their academic performance.

The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2011) posits that the influence of type of family structure on academic success continue through high school and it significantly influences outcomes such as high school dropout rates, graduation rates and age at first pregnancy. However, there are some social factors which contribute to this poor performance of students which are home background, inadequate social activities such as recreation clubs, field trip, school politics, misuse of technology such as internet, student-parent relationship, family size and school climate such as teacher-student relationship etc. (Orlu, 2013). Notwithstanding the influence of social factors, also personnel factors influence students' academic performance. Similarly, personnel factors refer to individual characteristics, traits and experiences that influence behavior, decisions and the overall wellbeing of people. It includes personal traits, emotional intelligence, mental health, stress management, self esteem, motivation etc. Personnel factors of the teachers can influence academic performance. As the teacher's personality can make the students to have or lose interest while the classes are on-going in Social Studies. Teachers are essential players in promoting quality education in schools because they are catalysts of change. Teachers at all levels of education system should have access to training and ongoing professional development so that they will be able to participate locally and internationally in decisions influencing their teaching environments (UNESCO, 2000). Educational administrators have no choice as to whether to train teachers and other employees or not. This is because the competence of employees will never last forever due to such factors such as curriculum change, technological change transfers and promotions (Ifere P.I, Aroh, P.N, Ogbueghu S.N & Obioha C.N, 2024).

Instructional materials are the relevant materials utilized by a teacher during Social Studies instructional process to facilitate teaching and learning and for the purpose of making the contents of the instructions more practical and less vague. It therefore follows that such resources may be both human and non-human provided they facilitate the acquisition and evaluation of knowledge, skills, attitudes morals and values (Esu and Inyang-Abia, 2004). Ogundare, (2003) defines Social Studies as a study of problems of survival in an environment and how to find solutions to them. School factors are the materials and facilities in the school, which include school buildings (classrooms, assembly halls, laboratories, workshops, libraries) teaching aids and devices such as modern educational hardware and their software in the form of magnetic tapes, films and transparencies (Ogbodo, 2005). The academic performance of the students in Social Studies can be influenced by the gender of the teachers (male and female). Gender refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men –such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men. Most people are born either male or female, they are taught appropriate norms and behaviours (Ifere P.I, Aroh P.N, Ogbueghu S.N & Obioha C.N, 2024)..

The current deteriorating nature of secondary school factors, which has resulted in students poor academic performance in termly examinations, inter school competitions, junior school certificate examination and even scholarship examinations is an issue of great concern to parents, students, stakeholders and Ministry of Education. This situation, coupled with inadequate funds, cultism, increasing rate of truancy,

mismanagement of school factors, poor utilization of instructional resources and non-challant attitude of students towards academics, tend to suggest that the government and school administrators / principals have failed in the management of human and material resources under their care, for proper and efficient functioning of the school. It is probably because of this that Chike-Okoli in support of Ikediashi (2002) points out that poor teaching experience, inadequate or poor physical infrastructure, unsatisfactory building design are likely to cause some physical discomfort for the students and are therefore bound to influence their academic performance. When the school factors are not adequate for the effective functioning of the school, and the government and school administrators are not doing anything to improve the situation, this will greatly influence students' academic performance because the classrooms are either congested or not properly arranged for learning coupled with the lack of instructional materials and outdated curriculum for teaching and learning. It is based on the above stated problems the study, that influence of school factors on academic performance of upper basic education Social Studies students in Abakaliki Education Zone, became necessary for investigation. This study therefore investigated Influence of social and personal factors on the academic performance of upper basic education Social Studies students in Abakaliki Education Zone, Ebonyi State?

Purpose of the study

1. The influence of social factors on the academic performance of upper basic education Social Studies students in Abakaliki Education Zone, Ebonyi State.
2. The Influence of personnel factors on the academic performance of upper basic education Social Studies students in Abakaliki Education Zone, Ebonyi State.

Research Questions

1. The influence of social factors on the academic performance of upper basic education Social Studies students in Abakaliki Education Zone, Ebonyi State.
2. The Influence of personnel factors on the academic performance of upper basic education Social Studies students in Abakaliki Education Zone, Ebonyi State

Research Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female teachers on the influence of social factors on Social Studies students academic performance.

H02: There is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female teachers on the influence of personnel factors on Social Studies students academic performance.

METHODOLOGY

The design study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of this study as well as the sample was 71 Social Studies teachers in Abakaliki Education Zone. The instrument used for the data collection was a questionnaire tagged: 'Questionnaire on Influence of social and personal factors on the academic performance of upper basic education Social Studies students structured by the researcher'. The questionnaire was face validated by three experts: two from Social Studies and one in Measurement and Evaluation in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The reliability of the instrument was determined by trial testing it using 30 teachers from Onueke Education Zone which was outside the area of study. Cronbach Alpha Statistical analysis was used to determine the internal consistency coefficient of the instrument and that yielded the coefficient value of 0.81. This value was considered high enough indicating that the instrument was reliable. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the three research questions, while t-test was used to test the three null- hypotheses at an alpha level of 0.05.

RESULTS

Research Question I

What is the influence of social factors on the academic performance of upper basic education Social Studies students in Abakaliki Education Zone, Ebonyi State?

TABLE 1: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of the Influence of Social Factors on the Academic Performance of Upper basic education Social Studies students in Abakaliki Education Zone

S/N	ITEMS	N	X	SD	DECISION
1	Students’ involvement in social unionisms causes distractions academically.	71	2.98	0.78	Agreed
2	Social activities in schools encroach into the periods of learning.	71	3.01	0.70	Agreed
3	Taking students on excursion and field trip as an extra-curricular activity influences their performance academically	71	2.91	0.75	Agreed
4	Students participation during classes can influence their academic performance	71	3.18	0.76	Agreed
5	Social clubs have bad influence on students performance.	71	3.02	0.73	Agreed
6	School social clubs are a learning incentive, which can improve the students zeal to learn.	71	3.14	0.66	Agreed
7	The family background of students can determine their mood and cause distraction during learning.	71	3.01	0.78	Agreed
8	Peer groups influence students’ academic performance.	71	3.21	0.65	Agreed
9	Religious background influences the students’ academic performance.	71	3.09	0.75	Agreed
Grand Mean		71	3.06	0.72	

Table 4, reveals that items 1 to 9 have mean scores above the criterion score of 2.50 which indicates that the respondents agreed that social factors influence students academic performance in upper basic schools in Abakaliki Education Zone. Specifically, the respondents agreed that students’ involvement in social unionisms causes distractions academically, social activities in schools encroach into the periods of learning, taking students on excursion and field trip as an extra-curricular activity influences their performance academically, students participation during classes can influence their academic performance, social clubs have bad influence on students performance, the family background of students can determine their mood and cause distraction during learning, peer groups influence students’ academic performance and religious background influences the students’ academic performance. The grand mean of 3.06 and a standard deviation of 0.72, it indicates that the respondents are in agreement that Social Factors influence Students Academic Performance.

Research Question2

What are the Influence of Personnel Factors on the Academic Performance of upper basic education Social Studies students in Abakaliki Education Zone, Ebonyi State?

TABLE 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of the Influence of Personnel Factors on the Academic Performance of upper basic education Social Studies students in Abakaliki Education Zone

S/N	ITEMS	N	X	SD	DECISION
10	The total number of teachers in the school is enough to handle the students academically.	71	2.97	0.71	Agreed
11	The teachers are specialists in the subjects they teach.	71	3.05	0.79	Agreed
12	The entire school workers are enough for the school's need.	71	3.07	0.81	Agreed
13	The teachers choice of method during teaching influences the students' academic performance	71	3.18	0.61	Agreed
14	The teachers are prepared before entering the classes.	71	3.15	0.68	Agreed
15	The individual intelligence of teachers influence their performance during teaching.	71	3.21	0.67	Agreed
16	The students prefer the male teachers classes to the female teachers classes.	71	3.16	0.71	Agreed
17	The health condition of teachers influence them while teaching.	71	3.35	0.63	Agreed
18	The teachers don't attend classes early.	71	2.97	0.87	Agreed
19	The mood of teachers while teaching influence students' academic performance	71	2.98	0.66	Agreed
20	The teachers ability to use the required instructional materials during lessons influence the students academic performance	71	3.19	0.57	Agreed
GRAND MEAN		71	3.11	0.70	

Table 2 shows that each items in 10 to 20 on the influence of personnel factors on Academic Performance of Upper basic education Social Studies students in Abakaliki Education Zone, Ebonyi State obtained a mean score above 2.50 with a grand mean of 3.11. This implies that the respondents rated these influences of personnel factors to be high and very effective. Specifically, it indicates that the total number of teachers in the school is enough to handle the students academically, the teachers are specialists in the subjects they teach, the entire school workers are enough for the school's need, the teachers choice of method during teaching influences the students' academic performance, the teachers are prepared before entering the classes, the individual intelligence of teachers influence their performance during teaching the students prefer the male teachers classes to the female teachers classes, the health condition of teachers influence them while teaching, the teachers don't attend classes early, the mood of teachers while teaching influence students' academic performance and the teachers ability to use the required instructional materials during lessons influence the students academic performance.

Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant difference in the score ratings of teachers on the influence of social factors on academic performance of students based on gender of the teachers.

Table 3: T-test of Male and Female Teachers Response on the Influence of Social Factors

S/N	Gender	N	X	SD	Df	t.cal	t.tab	Decision
1	Male	30	3.07	0.72	69	0.78	1.96	Accepted
2	Female	41	3.05	0.73				

From table 3, it was observed that the t-cal (0.78) is less than the t.crit (1.96). Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no significant difference in the responses of male and female teachers on the influence of social factors.

H02: There is no significant difference in the score ratings of teachers on the influence of personnel factors on academic performance of students based on gender of teachers.

Table 4: T-test of Male and Female Teachers Response on the Influence of Personnel Factors

S/N	Gender	N	X	SD	Df	t.cal	t.tab	Decision
1	Male	30	3.08	0.74	69	0.84	1.96	Accepted
2	Female	41	3.14	0.66				

From the result in table 4, it was observed that the t-cal (0.84) is less than the t.crit (1.96). Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no significant difference in the responses of male and female teachers on the influence of personnel factors on the academic performance of upper basic school students.

Influence of Social factors on the academic performance of upper basic education Social Studies students in Abakaliki Education Zone, Ebonyi State

The first finding of this study is that social factors influence the academic performance of upper basic education Social Studies students in Abakaliki Education Zone. Also, it shows that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on the influence of social factors. The result in table 3, revealed that social factors like field trips, the background of students, school unions, peer groups, influence students performance academically, and therefore, should be considered by the school authorities when assessing the performance of students both academically and socially. This indicated that students are influenced academically by social factors. This finding is in agreement with Ajila and Olutola (2009) who noted that the home has a great influence on the child's psychological, emotional, social and economic state. According to them, the state of the home affects the individual since the family is the first point of contact and socializing agent in an individual's life. The finding also agrees with the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2011) that posits that the influence of type of family structure on academic success continues through high school and it significantly influences outcomes such as high school dropout rates, graduation rates and age at first pregnancy.

Influence of personal factors on the academic performance of upper basic education Social Studies students in Abakaliki Education Zone Ebonyi State

The second finding of this study is that personnel factors influence the academic performance of upper basic education Social Studies students in Abakaliki Education Zone. Also, it shows that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on the influence of personnel factors. Table 4 shows that school factors like personnel factors such as the qualification of the teacher, the mood of the teacher, the availability of teachers in schools influence students and their performance in academics in upper basic schools in Abakaliki Education Zone. This finding is in consonance with Ivancevich (1994) who stated that according to behavioural scientists, effective worker performance requires motivation ability and reward system that encourages quality work. It is also in line with Juma (2011) who declared that a trained teacher will have necessary pedagogical skills which will promote students' understanding, motivating a student to learn, thereby promoting academic performance.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, the following conclusion was drawn: Social and personal factors determine the level of students' academic performance in schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher made the following recommendations;

1. The government should provide the necessary factors that are needed in schools to improve learning and promote performance of students in academics, both in internal and external examinations.
2. The government and school administrators should maintain and monitor the school factors to avoid misuse and punish offenders.

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