

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDE TO SCHOOL AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OKENE, KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between attitude to school and academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Okene, Kogi state, Nigeria. The study formulated and tested two hypotheses. To achieve the objectives of the study, 335 students were systematically selected from the total population of senior secondary school II students in Okene. Correlational research design was employed in the conduct of the research. Students Attitude Questionnaire (SAQ) was used for data collection. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the collected data. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to analyze the hypotheses. Results of the analysis indicated that significant positive relationship exists between student attitude towards school and academic achievement ($r = 0.353$, $p = 0.000$), between student attitude towards learning and academic achievement ($r = 0.413$, $p = 0.000$) and strong inverse relationship between students' values of education and academic achievement ($r = -0.927$, $p = 0.000$). Based on the findings, recommendations were made which include. Teachers should give reward such as words of encouragement to their students after every lesson so as to help them maintain positive attitude towards learning. The students should be encouraged to apply knowledge and skills taught through feedback and assignment.

Keywords: Attitude, Academic Achievement. Senior Secondary School, Okene

Introduction

Learning is the focus of the educational programmes. It occupies a very important place in human lives. Most of what people do or do not do is influenced by what they learn and how they learn it. Kuppuswamy (2007:108) defined learning as, the process by which an organism, as a result of its interaction in a situation, acquires a new mode of behaviour, which tends to persist and affect the general behavioural pattern of the organism, to a certain degree". Learning takes place when an organism reacts in a situation. However, in a school situation, various elements (the learner, environment, teacher, instructional materials, methodology) are involved in the process of learning.

The learner is involved; unless the learner is prepared or enabled to learn, learning cannot be achieved.

Attitude is the manner of disposition, feeling and position with regard to a person or thing, tendency or orientation especially in the mind. It is an expression of a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of a person, place, thing or event. These are fundamental determinants of our perceptions of, and actions toward all aspects of our social environment. Attitudes involve a complex organization of evaluative beliefs, feelings, and tendencies toward certain actions. (Iedunote, 2017). Any concept that specifies an individual's feeling of likeness or dislike to anything

is termed his/her attitude towards that item. Attitude can be a method, nature, emotion, or situation concerning a discrete or article, especially of the mind (Hussaini, Foong & Kamar, as cited in Ibrahim 2018). For example, I like my dress that means I am expressing my attitude towards my dress. Attitude can be described as a tendency to react positively or negatively to a person or circumstances. Thus the two main elements of attitude are this tendency or predisposition and the direction of this predisposition. According to Gordon Allport as cited by Iedunote, (2017). An attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related. These can also be explicit and implicit; Explicit attitudes are those that we are consciously aware of and that clearly influence our behaviors and beliefs. Implicit attitudes are unconscious, but still, have an effect on our beliefs and behaviors.

Attitude to school is the way students respond toward school and learning. It denotes a positive or negative predisposition toward schooling and learning activities, most children come to school ready and willing to learn. How best can school foster and strengthen their predisposition and ensure that they leave school with the motivation and capacity to continue learning throughout life has remained a matter of great concern. Without development of the right attitude, students may not be well prepared to acquire the new knowledge and skills necessary for successful adaptation to changing circumstances and the necessary situation to achieve in their academic pursuit (Kuusinen & Leskinen, 2018).

Attitude is an important construct

in social psychology because it encompasses powerful tendencies to feel, believe and act in a positive or negative way. People perspective has been a very complicated issue to describe since it cannot be directly observed. behaviour will affect the choices that a learner makes and may be acquired from a variety of sources (Gagne as cited in Dagneu, 2017). Koballa (1988) extended the definition to explain behaviour, where he stated that, "these were behaviors that are associated with critical thinking". The affective variables according to Koballa (1988) were: attitude, belief, opinion, value, behavioral intention, and behavior. The interaction of the affective variables helped to decide the perspective of a student possessed. Koballa (1988) summarized three reasons for continuing to investigate attitudes. First, behaviour are enduring and seem to remain relatively stable over time. Second, behaviour are learned (students are not born liking or disliking schooling). Third, attitudes are related to behavior, that is, students' actions reflect their feelings toward objects and issues.

Values of education means the respect that Okene students have for their education that could help them to feel a responsibility to work hard, to learn, to make something of themselves. It is about figuring out how students take their education and the experiences they had in school and translate that into something that is going to be a worthwhile and impactful career for them. This is very important in the educational attainment of individual students. As Lewis in Dagneu (2017) stated that values of learning can make a very important contribution to fostering strong positive relationship with educational achievement, positive dispositions to learning, producing a

calm teaching and learning environment. Values of education nurture in students various dimensions of intellectual depth, communicative competence, and capacity for reflection, and self-knowledge.

Research findings showed that students' academic achievement is influenced by their attitude with reference to certain demographic variables like gender, medium of instruction in the school and educational level of parents. The study of Musheer, Govil, and Gupta, (2016) attempts to know the perspective of secondary school students towards their school, the findings of the research revealed that there is a significant disparity in the perspective of secondary school students behaviour with reference to their gender and medium of instruction. However, no difference has been found in the attitude of secondary school students towards school climate in relation to their parental education. The persistent under-achievement has warranted further research by Langat (2017) who studied students' attitudes and their effects on learning and achievement in mathematics among public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya to determine what factors have not been considered nor given enough attention in the on-going reform efforts. The findings also showed that perceptions and beliefs, perceived learning abilities and competencies and previous performances of students in mathematics affected their level of motivation leading to low outcomes.

A 2016 study, conducted between 1971-2014 by researchers from San Diego State University, surveyed over eight million students and found that millennials value education less and money more. According to the research, over 71 percent of millennials said that

making money was important, whereas earlier generations said that though making money was the point of college, education was much more important.

The study is of significant to and would help in understanding the importance, influence and effects of students attitude and their values for education regarding teaching and learning which would appeal to stakeholders, subject or curriculum designers, teachers, students, examination bodies, school administrators and counselors to take the necessary measures.

The benefits and importance of education are indisputable, both for individual students and the future of our society. Yet how many of our students appreciate their education? And how many of them demonstrate positive attitude toward school and learning? Without an understanding of what education offers, what it can and will provide, there will always be insufficient motivation to learn and to embrace and apply that learning. For whatever reasons, here in Okene-Kogi State and in many states in Nigeria, education is undervalued. It is against this background that this study investigated the relationship between attitude to school, values of education and academic achievement among Okene senior secondary school students in Kogi state. With a view to find out the correlation between students' perspective toward school and their academic achievement, to assess the correlation between students' attitude toward learning and their academic achievement & to find out the correlation between student's values of education and their academic achievement.

Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives of this research and make specific

recommendations the following questions were proposed to guide the entire research work:

What is the correlation between students' perception towards school and their academic achievement among Senior Secondary schools in Okene?

What is the correlation between students' perception towards learning and their academic achievement among senior secondary schools in Okene?

What is the correlation between students' value of education and their academic achievement among senior secondary schools in Okene?

Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between students' attitude towards school and their academic achievement.

Ho₂: There is no significant the relationship between students' attitude towards learning and their academic achievement.

Ho₃ There is no significant relationship between students' value of education and their academic achievement.

Methodology

This study adopted a correlational design as it tried to examine the relationship between variables. Simple random sampling technique involving balloting method was used to select five schools from all the sixteen secondary schools in the study area. While systematic sampling technique was used to select 335 subjects from the sampled schools in Okene-Kogi state. A questionnaire tagged "Student Attitudes Questionnaire (SAQ), is adapted from You and Your School (1993) Questionnaire designed on behalf of National Commission on Education by National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales. This is a

standardized instrument that is designed to measure the perception of students towards school and learning. There are twenty-five (25) items in the scale which are categorised into two sections. Section A is designed to look into students' attitude toward liking for school and section B is to look into students' interest in school work. The instrument required students to indicate their level of agreement with each of a number of statements by circling a number on a five-point scale either Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree or Not sure. Copies of the adopted copy were given to 5 experts in Educational Psychology, Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria to validate in terms of looking and observing the instruments to ascertain their appropriateness and effectiveness with reference to the research objectives. Their input of modifying and improving the instruments established the face validity and make it appropriate for use in this research.

To establish the reliability of the instrument a pilot testing was conducted in three schools from the populated schools which are not part of the sampled schools selected for the research. On-spot mode of assessment was administered. Fifty (50) questionnaires were distributed to 25 male and 25 female students. The data collected were coded and analysed using Guttman Split-Half method of estimating reliability coefficient to measure the internal consistency. Student Attitude Questionnaire has the reliability figure of 0.84. For the analysis of data, frequency counts and simple percentages were used for the analysis of demographic data, mean standard deviation was used to analysed the research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation

statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant.

Result

Hypothesis One: *There is no significant correlation between*

students' perception toward school and educational achievement among senior secondary school students in Okene, Kogi State.

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation statistics on the correlation between students' behavior toward school and educational achievement.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	r	df	p-value
Attitude towards school	319	72.29	7.39	0.353**	317	0.000
Students' educational achievement	319	42.34	6.81			

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Correlation between student attitudes towards school and educational achievement were computed and presented in the table 1 above. The result showed clear relationship between these two variables ($r = 0.353$, $p = 0.000$). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Consequently, it could be seen that, there is significant

correlation between student behavior towards school and educational achievement.

Hypothesis Two: *There is no significant correlation between students' behavior towards learning and educational achievement among senior secondary school students in Okene, Kogi state.*

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation statistics on the bond between students' attitude toward learning and educational achievement.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	r	p-value
Attitude towards learning	319	69.69	8.41	317	0.413**	0.000
Students' academic achievement	319	42.34	6.81			

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Correlation result between student behavior towards learning and educational achievement were computed and presented in the table 2 above. The result revealed positive correlation between these two variables ($r = 0.413$, $P = 0.000$). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Consequently, it

could be concluded that there is significant relationship between student behavior towards learning and educational achievement.

Hypothesis Three: *There is no significant relationship between students value of education and their educational achievement.*

Table 3: Pearson product moment correlation statistics on the bond between student’s values of education and academic achievement.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	R	p-value
Students’ value for Education	319	26.6176	6.61695	317	-0.927**	0.001
Students’ academic achievement	319	42.34	6.807			

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation result between students’ values for education and academic achievement were computed and presented in table 3. The result revealed strong inverse relationship between these two variables ($r = -0.927$, $p = 0.000$). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Consequently, it could be said that there is significant but inverse relationship between students’ values for education and academic achievement. Hence, the lesser the value they have for education, the lower their academic achievement.

Discussion

The research investigates the correlation between student behavior toward school and their educational achievement of senior secondary school students in Okene, Kogi State of Nigeria. The outcome of the findings are discussed below:

The correlation between student behavior to school and educational achievement: revealed that there is a positive but weak relationship between student attitudes towards school and educational achievement. Similarly, Bayram and Deniz (2018) found that there is a positive correlation between students’ behavior towards modern learning technologies and their educational achievement. It may be so because the external factors like society and peer group have more impact on learners than the factors like parental educational status. The present

education system is student centred. The quality of instruction being used plays a great role in the development of a positive school. Hoy and Sabo (1998) in their study found positive link between school climate and scholastic achievement. Dwivedi (2005) found that the students having positive behaviour towards school environment have significantly better academic achievements than the students having poor feelings towards school environment.

Relationship between student attitude towards learning and academic achievement: found that there is significant positive relationship between student behaviour towards education and academic achievement. This finding is consistent with that of Tammy as cited in Ibrahim (2018) which ascertained the relationship between secondary school students’ attitudes towards physical education and their achievement in the subject. It was found that most students exhibit negative attitudes towards physical education while positive relationship was expressed between students’ attitudes and their achievement in the subject. This finding also confirm with that of Langat (2016) which found out that most students had a positive attitude towards mathematics and that they perceived mathematics as doable, learnable and important yet this did not translate to good grades. The students should be encouraged to apply the taught knowledge and skills through

feedback and assignments. From above we can see that attitudes toward school and school works such as school sensible rules, teach things that will be useful and relevant to job preference, student self-independent and stand on feet while examination, helping students to learn spare (leisure) time, qualified teachers, taking immediate action when seeing someone breaking school rules, students group work and discussion with friends, thorough cross checking of homework, classroom management and pleasing student while make good work all contribute positively to students' academic achievement.

Relationship between students' values of education and academic achievement: results revealed an inverse relationship between students' values of education and academic achievement. This result is confirmed with that of American State University's career outcome statistics of the 2015-2016 school year, the study showed that students want to obtain more financial stability and job security, which leads them onto career paths that do not necessarily stem from their majors. Also, many scholars agreed that values of education, achievement motivation, and students' attitudes towards school were significant contributors of academic achievement. According to Dagnev (2017), the students' attitudes towards school, values of education, achievement motivation had positive and significant relationship with academic achievement. And that all the three variables were significantly to predict academic achievement.

For most secondary school students, the next step after graduation is university. But, many of the students seem not want to go to university because of concerns over job prospects after graduation.

The benefits and importance of education are indisputable, both for individual students and the future of our society. For whatever reasons, here in the

Kogi state and in many states in Nigeria, it is undervalued. So what can we do? Research suggests that if a parent holds education in high regard, his or her children are much more likely to do so. In particular, good models of constructive social and education values and high aspirations relating to personal fulfillment and good citizenship has a significant positive effect on children's achievement, the scale of which is evident across all social classes and all ethnic groups (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). But, as we know, not all students have this type of parental support, guidance or aspirations.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that relationship exists between student attitudes towards school and academic achievement, relationship exists between student attitudes towards learning activities and academic achievement. Attitude contributed to the problems that distract the students from maximum academic output. It is therefore concluded that the higher negative attitude to school the lower academic performance of students which constitutes serious problems that distract the students from maximum academic achievement. Also, values of education can make a very important contribution to fostering strong positive relationship with academic achievement. Therefore, students should learn how to appreciate and value their education. Appreciation is something that grows and develops, and it is not something we can change overnight; however, without value, our education system is valueless.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are hereby put forward:

Curriculum planners, educators, stakeholders and teachers should offer and build on experiences and opportunities that inspire the students to engage fully in the

material fact and acquire knowledge and skills that would enable them excel in school because they like and value it.

Teachers should give reward such as word of encouragement to their students after every lesson so as to help them maintain positive attitude towards learning.

The students should be encouraged to apply knowledge and skills taught through feedback and assignment.

Guidance and counseling experts should organize seminars and workshops to train students on the importance and values of education. This will help solve students' academic problems in schools.

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