

STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN WAEC'S SENIOR SCHOOL CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATIONS IN EDO STATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR
CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS

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ABSTRACT

This study was aimed at assessing the academic performance of students enrolled for WAEC Senior School Certificate Examinations in selected public senior secondary schools in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State from 2001-2010. The researcher's interest was aroused into this investigation due to the declining rate of students' performances in public examinations like WAEC and NECO as evidenced by the mass failures recorded in recent years. The study examined students' performances in WAEC's senior school Certificate examinations in the last ten years and ascertained the performance of students in the key subjects needed for further studies. Also, the study found the various factors responsible for the level of students performance. The study used descriptive survey design. The method used for data collection was in two phases: first, the results of WAEC's SSCE from 2001-2010 were collected from all the sampled schools in Oredo Local Government. The second phase was administration of a structured questionnaire addressed to teachers and students from the selected public secondary schools and also to parents in Oredo Local Government Area. Descriptive statistics (simple mean and standard deviation), percentage counts, rank and ANOVA were employed by the researcher for data analysis. The findings of the study revealed poor academic performance - far below average level by students in Oredo Local Government Area, from 2001-2010 and that among many other factors, students negative attitude towards learning, teachers' nonchalant and unprofessional attitude to teaching, the lack of pragmatic nature of the nation's education, lack of conducive classrooms as well as poor quality control of education by the government promote the poor level of students academic performance. Furthermore, this study concluded that, since the quality of education of a particular nation has a direct effect on the societal well-being of that nation, students' poor performances such as these portends great danger for Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. If not urgently addressed. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that concerted efforts be made to improve the performance of students registering for WAEC SSCE in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. Furthermore, parents were advised to attend parents' Teachers Association (PTA) meeting so as to liaise with teachers on how to tackle the academic problems confronting these students. School inspectors were also advised to be alive in their duty so as to ensure quality control of education. In addition, churches were also advised to teach and admonish their members on the need to play active and positive roles in re-positioning education in the state.

Conclusion

This study has established that the ultimate aim of education is to develop in the learner the desirable knowledge, and skills, values and attitudes needed for self-improvement, societal development and nation building. In Nigerian educational institutions, like so many other nations' institutions, success is measured by students' academic performance. Based on this research, academic performance of secondary school students in Oredo Local Government Area has been very poor in recent years. This study revealed that some of the factors responsible for this level of performance are students, teachers, parents, and government induced.

According to this study, students' factors range from their negative attitude towards study, cultism, the longing for miracle centres or mercenaries who impersonate to wrong peer groups who influence their fellow students negatively. Of all the students induced factors, students' negative attitude towards study is the number one determinant of poor academic performance in WAEC Senior School Certificate Examination. In fact, amongst all the factors discovered to be responsible for poor academic performance, students' negative attitude remains the number one determinant.

The study further revealed that teacher's attitude towards teaching is a major factor that promotes poor academic performance in WAEC's SSCE. Some teachers are not professional in the discharge of their duties. Some attribute this nonchalant attitude to lack of adequate motivation for the teachers. According to this study, when teachers are well motivated, they tend to teach better, thereby enhancing students' performance academically. Teacher's inordinate behavior towards students was found to also affect the learning among students. Also when teachers do not plan well before teaching they are bound to produce bad students in public examinations.

This study also revealed that students enjoy learning more under conducive and serene classrooms. That is; the school climate and infrastructure are factor that affects learning among students. Most schools lack adequate or complete laboratories, and this also affects or impedes students learning ability. In addition, it was also discovered that lack of teaching materials in schools affects students learning ability negatively.

More so, this study in addition, revealed that government's wrong educational policies and politics often have an effort on student's academic performance. In most cases, the policies on educational plans are made without consulting with the public on its workability. It was also revealed that government nonchalant attitude towards teachers' welfare and its poor quality control of education are also factors that adversely affect students academic performance. This is so, because the teachers feel they desire better emolument for their task of teaching and molding the future leaders of Nigeria. The inspectors of education were also seen as not being diligent in their duties of checking the schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made:

1. Pastors and other Christian leaders should organize special forum or workshop for their members who are teachers in secondary schools on the need for them to be diligent in their duties and God-fearing. The church must take a bold stance on the issues of repositioning our schools.
2. The Nigerian Baptist Convention as well as other church organizations should pass a resolution stopping secondary school teachers, principals, inspectors and students from partaking in the annual convention during working days or hours. They should remain in their duty posts because according to this research, "To work is to

pray.” The Convention therefore, as a Christian body must discourage teachers from abandoning their duty post just to attend the convention in session.

3. The church should device a way of motivating teachers who are their members, thereby spurring them into giving their best as Godly teachers. This is necessary and biblical because the church, by virtue of its position and functions, can operate or partake in every area where God is at work. More so, societal and nation building is one of God’s business.

4. Teachers should stop their inordinate behavior towards students and become more moderate in their dealings with them so that learning can be enhanced.

5. The ecumenical drive of churches should lead them to organize an annual award for the best three teachers in Oredo Local Government Area. This will go a long way to encourage teachers to put more efforts into their work. This will also serve as a clarion call for other religious bodies to do the same with their teachers (Muslims and other Christian sects).

6. A state of emergency should be declared on the education sector.

7. The affective and psychomotor domains of learning should also be emphasized in learning and teaching process so as to improve students’ academic performance. So much effort or attention has been placed singularly on the cognitive domain of learning and this should not be allowed to continue.

8. Government should make it a necessity to involve the public whenever they are about formulating new educational policies or plans. Such a conference will give room for the input of all the stakeholders (parents, teachers, students representative, and so on) and consequently, lead to a better policy or plan for the nation’s education.

9. The nation’s education system or nature should be re-appraised and patterned to become more pragmatic in nature for this is long overdue.

