

Influence Of Co-curricular Activities On Senior Secondary School Students' Academic Achievement In English Language In Nigeria

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Abstract: This paper investigates the influence of co-curricular activities on Senior Secondary School Students' achievement in Nigeria. The variables to be considered are Press club and Literary and debating society, the involvement period, and their academic achievement. Eight out of 17 secondary schools are randomly selected with one hundred students from each school. The questionnaires for the data collection are on students' personal data and twelve questions on press club and literary and debating society. The mock examination results show that there is a positive significant influence in co-curricular activities on senior secondary school students' academic achievement in English.

Key Words: co-curricular activities, academic achievement, english language teaching

Abstrak: Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui pengaruh kegiatan ko-kurikuler terhadap prestasi Siswa pada Sekolah Menengah Atas di Nigeria. Variabel yang harus dipertimbangkan adalah klub pers dan sastra dan himpunan debat, pada periode keterlibatan, dan prestasi akademik. Delapan dari 17 sekolah menengah yang dipilih secara acak dengan seratus siswa dari masing-masing sekolah. Kuesioner untuk pengumpulan data adalah data pribadi siswa dan dua belas pertanyaan tentang klub Pers dan Sastra dan himpunan debat. Hasil test buatan menunjukkan bahwa ada pengaruh positif yang signifikan dalam kegiatan ko-kurikuler terhadap prestasi akademik siswa sekolah menengah atas dalam pelajaran bahasa Inggris.

Kata kunci: kegiatan ko-kurikuler, prestasi akademik, pengajaran Bahasa Inggris

English language plays a significant role in the education system in Nigeria, especially at both post primary and tertiary levels. It is not only the medium of instruction but also a compulsory subject offered to all. Thus, the curriculum guidelines set for the teaching of English language in secondary schools have been designed generally towards the achievement of a high level of proficiency in the Nigerian students' use of English language (FME, 1985). Since English language is the prime subject to all other subjects taught in schools, there is crying need to be proficient in it. Over the years, tremendous efforts have been made to ensure its (English) effective teaching and learning in schools. Unfortunately, these efforts have not yielded much

result as most students still fail in their West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) examinations.

Years back, concentration was focused on intra-personal determinants of school achievement to the detriment of external determinants while there is increasing evidence to show that cognitive abilities explain only limited part of the variance in academic achievement of students (Olasheinde, 1999). Developmental psychologists recognize the fact that during adolescence, children become conscious of being involved in social relationships with practical significance and with sentimental ideals.

It is believed that if co-curricular activities are well supervised, they can make learners responsive and competent in the target language as a result of constant practice. Receptive and efficient students will be familiarized with the sociolinguistic rules that will help them function within the Nigerian cultural context and be proficient in the four basic language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. The question of this research is whether involvement in co-curricular activities has significant impact on students' academic achievement. The aim of the paper is to explore the effects of co-curricular activities on Senior Secondary School Students' achievement in English language in Nigeria.

Co-curricular activities are ways of presenting information in the form of spoken words, dialogue, discussion interview, commentary and dramatized sense. Researchers like (Pickard, 1995; Cheung, 1995; Rombokas, 1995; Olasheinde, 1999; Lawal, 2006) and a host of others agree that students are only motivated to learn things that are important and meaningful to them. The Ministry of Education of Nigeria also believes that co-curricular activities for schools are ways to install active social interaction, leadership role, self-discipline and self confidence in them. Through extra-curricular activities, students learn character building lessons that they can apply to their study habits and lives. Activities, such as literary and debating society, press club and other social groups teach students how to discipline themselves through drills, practices or rehearsals. As school activities, students have responsibilities to the activities and must participate and perform any task assigned to them whether it is writing a report or debating a topic. Therefore, such students gain a sense of self-respect, self-esteem and self-confidence.

Although, social aspects of a student's life do not directly affect their academic achievement, but they do affect the overall performance of the students, learning is not only achieved through reading books, but also from peers through extra-curricular activities. Students learn how to compromise and work in a group and interact with people who are not within their close group. Press club in school helps to improve the level of interaction among students; it also develops the skills of writing and preserves the norms and values of the school. It improves the intellectual activities by promoting learning environment. Press club creates an exciting, entertaining and creative environment in school, thereby improving writing and speaking abilities for

proficiency and efficiency in the use of English language.

A study carried out by Hafiz and Tudor (1989) cited by Pickard (1996) shows that experimental group of second language learners who have spent three months reading for pleasure for one hour per day, make significant levels of improvement in all language tests. In other words, learners of English language who are exposed to extensive reading and listening have effected substantial improvement in linguistic proficiency skills in English language as a second language. Cheung, (Cheung, 1995) also emphasizes the importance of newspaper in language learning by saying that newspapers are among the relevant texts used in the classroom. Newspaper is the language enrichment material, and it is easy to adopt, mark, cut, paste and discard easily. In other words, reading and debating issues in novels, newspapers and magazines help to widen the students' knowledge and use of the language unconsciously. Faerron (1975) and Bergen-cico & Vicomi (2013) posit that reading books and student involvement in extracurricular and co-curricular activities has been the most accessible recreational activities with positive link to many aspects of academic success in GPA, retention, language use and confidence building in students and for children in developing countries.

Factors Promoting the Learning of English as a Second Language

Teachers play a vital role in the teaching/learning of English as a second language. Alfredo (Alfredo, 1999) emphasizes the role of the teachers in assisting students through the use of newspaper, magazines, novel, and other prints as a source of deviating from oral discussions by seriously addressing students' attitudes and motivation, which play a large role in propelling students to success. Teachers should be prepared to teach as expected and face the task decently, read for proper grooming and be motivated while performing their duties. Teachers of English language at this level should have minimum of first degree in the subject and should have experience before they can be allowed to teach. Therefore, English language teachers must have adequate knowledge of language theories and methodologies of teaching and should be encouraged to go for service training.

The introduction of reading and writing workshop, literary discussion and participation in co-

operative learning groups give room for students to communicate with others, share ideas and gain confidence with books and other printed materials. In other words, teachers should select materials that appeal to the learners both culturally and linguistically.

The study of literature is another factor that promotes the learning of English language. According to Emenanjo (Emenanjo, 2003), literature is an exercise of the mind and intellect which emanate from ones desire to narrate stories using words creatively to expose aspects of the experiences of mankind. Literature is language in use and is a tool for teaching English language in a second language situation. It facilitates the acquisition of grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing, all of which are taught in English language class. Yusuf (Yusuf, 2001) contends that students of literature have the opportunity to improve their sentence construction since they are able to see how sentences unite and cohere and their use in written and oral communication. Bright and Macgregor (Bright, Macgregor 1970) are also of the view that where there is little reading, there will be little language. Therefore, students who study literature would be exposed to stylistic uses of language. Their study also suggest of enhancing better performance in English language examinations. Aderemi (Aderemi, 1997) in one of his studies confirms that students who study literature in English performs better in English than those who are not offered the subject. So students should be encouraged to read extensively for better performance in the language and should be prepared to work to attain success.

Motivation is a factor that can facilitate the learning/teaching of English in our society. Aliyu (Aliyu, 2002) asserts that learners need both instrumental and integrative types of motivation. Most students do not understand why they have to pass well in English language. There is no motivation from both the parents and government to gear up their interest in learning. So, for students to perform well in the subject, they should be sensitized on the importance of English all over the world. More authors and writers should be recognized and appreciated by selecting their works for use. The habit of reading should also be cultivated in students at the secondary school level since most of them enter school with varied backgrounds and little knowledge on reading. In other words, the four types of reading should be taught alongside with listening so that they can be aware and use them as a way of learning and relearning.

Increasing inter-marriage across ethnic groups is another factor that promotes the teaching and learning of English language in the country. It is such a situation where both parents could not speak each other's language, and English language becomes inevitably the language of their children. Such children go to standard schools where the target language is mainly the language of instruction. The anxiety of some illiterate parents to Western education helps to promote the learning of English language because such parents would do anything to help them speak English language as a sign of pride, and encourage them. Therefore, the socio-economic status of parents have influence in promoting learning among students by providing the necessary facilities that enhance learning and students from such homes do less household duties that can take most of their leisure time; as a result, they are more active in the activities carried out in school. Hillock (Hillock, 1981) as cited by Yusuf (Yusuf, 2002) agrees that the amount of play time of children depends primarily on the family's economic status.

According to Bello (Bello, 2002), gender stereotyping is a social phenomenon through which fixed or standardized roles are ascribed to male and female by the society through socialization process. In every society there are gender roles to be acquired among other roles. Gender roles set the pattern according to which individual male and female is to act in a given situation. For instance, a male child in most societies, including Nigeria must learn to be competitive, aggressive and full of ambition in direct contrast to female child that is expected to be gentle, submissive and less ambitious.

METHOD

The question of this research deals with the involvement in co-curricular activities has significant impact on students' academic achievement. The option emanated from this study reviews that curricular activities in secondary schools are highly desirable. The following hypotheses are generated to find out whether students' participation in co-curricular activities has significant influence on senior secondary school students' academic achievement.

HO1: co-curricular activities have no significant influence on senior secondary school students' general academic achievement in English language.

HO2: the periods of involvement in co-curricular activities have no significant influence on senior sec-

ondary school student's academic achievement in English language.

HO3&4: co-curricular activities have no significant influence on male/female senior secondary school students' academic achievement in English language.

Instrument

A research made questionnaire tagged students' co-curricular activities (SCAQ) is used for data collection on the level of participation in press club and literary and debating societies, the level of involvement by students and the school administration. Eight secondary schools were randomly selected from seventeen Gov-ernment and grant aided schools in Ilorin West and a sample of 800 senior secondary year three students from the eight selected schools are involved in the study from Nigeria. Hypotheses 1,3 and 4 are tested with the use of Pearson Product Movement Correlation Statistic and hypothesis 2 is tested with the use of t-test statistical technique, each at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

HO1: co-curricular activities have no influence on senior secondary school students' general academic achievement in English language. Pearson analysis (Table 1) is showing the influence of co-curricular activities on senior secondary school students' academic achievement.

The result in Table 1 indicates that the calculated t-value 0.905 is greater than the calculated r-value 0.062 with 79.8% degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Hypothesis one is rejected and shows that the meaning that there is a significant influence of co-curricular activities on senior secondary school students' academic achievement in English language in Nigeria.

HO2: the period of involvement in co-curricular activities has no significant influence on senior secondary school students' academic achievement in English language. The period of involvement in co-curricular activities on the students' academic achievement is shown in Table 2.

Hypothesis two shows that the calculated t-value 2.610 is greater than critical r-value 1.906 with 798 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. Thus the hypothesis is rejected and shows that there is a significant influence of the periods of involvement in co-curricular activities on senior secondary school students' academic achievements in English language.

HO3: co-curricular activities have no significant influence on male students' academic achievement in English language. Pearson's analysis (Table 3) is showing the influence of male students' involvement in co-curricular activities on their academic achievement. The calculated t-value 0.739 is greater than the critical r-value 0.139 with 239 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance of male involvement in co-curricular activities on their academic achievement in English language.

HO4: co-curricular activities have no significant influence on female students' academic achievement

Table 1. Pearson Analysis Is Showing The Influence Of Co-Curricular Activities On Senior Secondary School Students' Academic Achievement

	Frequency	Mean	Standard deviation.	Degree of freedom	Calculated t-value	Calculated r-value
Co-curricular activities	800	3.454	2.449	79.8	.905	.062
Students' academic achievement in English	800	6.110	3.88			

P< 0.05

Table 2. The Period Of Involvement In Co-curricular Activities On The Students' Academic Achievement

	Frequency	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree of freedom	Calculated t-value	Calculated r-value
Less than one year	115	2.09	2.10	798	2.610	1.906
More than one year	685	3.55	2.49			

P< 0.05

Table 3. Pearson's Analysis Is Showing The Influence Of Male Students' Involvement In Co-curricular Activities On Their Academic Achievement

	Frequency	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree of frequency	Calculated t-value	Calculated r-value
Male co-curricular activities	241	4.900	2.394	239	.239	.139
Male academic achievement	241	4.485	2.113			

P<0.05

Table 4. Pearson Analysis Is Showing The Influence Of Female Students' Involvement In Co-curricular Activities On Their Academic Achievement

	Frequency	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree of frequency	Calculated t-value	Calculated r-value
Female co-curricular activities	559	2.943	1.051	557	.826	.088
Their academic achievement	559	2.310	1.020			

P<0.05

in English language. Pearson analysis (Table 4) is showing the influence of female students' involvement in co-curricular activities on their academic achievement.

Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value .826 is greater than the critical r-value 0.088 with 557 degree of freedom at 0.05 alpha level. In other words, there is a significant influence of female involvement in co-curricular activities on their academic achievement in English language.

Based on the result, the following summary is made: (a) there is a significant influence of co-curricular activities on senior secondary school students' academic achievement in English language, (b) there is a significant influence of the period of involvement in co-curricular activities on senior secondary school students' academic achievement in English language, (c) there is a significant influence in male students' participation in co-curricular activities on senior secondary school students' academic achievement in English language, (d) there is also significant influence of female students' participation in co-curricular activities on senior secondary school student's academic achievement.

DISCUSSION

From the findings of this research, it is discovered that there is significant influence in students' participation in co-curricular activities and their aca-

demic achievement. HO1 shows high correlation of 0.905 between co-curricular activities and students' academic achievement. The result of this study, therefore, reveals that literary and debating society and press club are the most active activity among students. The findings suggests previous findings such as (Chioma, 1942; Itammond, 1945) as cited by Olasheinde (1979) which differently find that there is a significant difference between physical and athletic interest and the involvement in extra-curricular activities has correlation with the academic achievement of the students.

HO2 also reveals that the period of involvement in co-curricular activities has significant influence on students' academic achievement and it indicates that 685 out of 800 respondents are members of co-curricular activities. In agreement with this finding, Hafiz and Tudor (Hafiz&Tudor, 1989) attest that second language learners who spend more time in reading and listening for pleasure will have significant level of improvement in all the language skills. Olajide (2004) also affirmed that lovers of literacy and extracurricular activities should embark on schemes that would promote reading not only in Nigerian schools but also other colleges all over the world. Therefore, students who are exposed to extensive reading, listening and speaking will substantially improve in their linguistic proficiency skills in English language.

HO3&4 show that gender difference in co-curricular activities as related sampled schools, 241

(30.1%) of the respondents are male while 559 (69.9%) are female in the eight selected schools for the study. School type facilitates effective learning among students. This is evident in the difference in performance of students in Mock examination results in the different schools. This shows that both male and female students are active members of literary and debating society as well as press club in the selected schools.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

This paper has revealed the participation of students in co-curricular activities in schools in Ilorin, Nigeria. It also reveals the influence of students' involvement in literary and debating society and press club on their academic achievement in senior secondary school.

The relevance of co-curricular activities to the overall language and social needs of students at school has been emphasized by the results of the present study. The research equally finds out that the level of participation of students in co-curricular activities is high. The responses of students in the 8 selected schools on the items of the questionnaire show the existence of the activities in the schools and the majority of the students are members of literary and debating societies and press clubs. It also reveals that students that spend most of their time at home listening to radio and television programs perform better in the language. This study has also revealed inadequate involvement and encouragement on the part of the school management and teachers, and the programs are not well organized coupled with poor financial backing by the school authorities.

Therefore, schools principals and teachers should be actively involved in co-curricular activities of the school to enable the students benefit and improve their proficiency in the use of the targeted language. Constant organization of the activities will attract more students as members.

Suggestions

It can be said that co-curricular activities that aid language learning will be of immense benefit to students in the senior secondary school if the activities are included in the school programs and necessary facilities are provided to motivate students to actively

participate so as to improve their ability to manipulate the language effectively. Equally emphasis should be placed on the need for teachers of English language and school management to be active in the organization of the school activities for positive results both in academic and social development of students.

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