

SCHOOLS READINESS AS AN INNOVATION ON DEVELOPING THE ADOLESCENT COGNITIVE SOCIAL SKILLS IN LEARNING: PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of schools readiness on developing the adolescent cognitive social skills in learning. To achieve the objectives of the study, the study was guided by two research questions and two research hypotheses. The study randomly sampled total 231 respondents comprised of 70 head teachers and 161 teachers from Yola Central and Mubi North Senatorial Districts of the Adamawa State, Nigeria. The study used structured questionnaire for data collection, while data were analysed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. The study found that qualitative teachers significantly influence developed cognitive and social skills among students. Also, the study found that learning resources significantly influence the required students with cognitive and social skills. The study recommended that The educational management and concerned authorities should ensure that only qualified teachers are engage in the teaching services and also that there should be consistent provision of learning facilities to ensure proper development of cognitive and social skills among students.

Keyword: school readiness, innovation, adolescent, cognitive and social skills

INTRODUCTION

The concept of readiness was first discussed by Pestalozzi (1898 p.1915) when he said that,

“a child was innately good and had within him the moral, intellectual and physical powers which he could develop through his own activity and experience. He argued that natural development was continuous and gradual and that all children were capable of developing into morally respectable, economically self-sufficient and socially useful adults”.

Wagner (2014) asserted that the concept school readiness did not gain acceptance in the United States until in the early 1920s when it was given serious attention by the international kindergarten union. School readiness was first developed in the United States of America to address educational inequity among students coming from difficult economic backgrounds after the First World War (Wagner, 2014). Since then the concept has been changing over time resulting to different forms such as early childhood, kindergarten, play and learn group, day care and nursery, readiness to learn, readiness to school among various countries. Literature on readiness profoundly focused on readiness to learn and readiness to school (Kagan & Rigby, 2013). Hence, school readiness means how to prepare a child to learn and succeed in school, cognitively, socially, physically, morally and emotionally (Pitt et al., 2013).

However, readiness in psychological perspectives is the child maturational ability (genetic or environmental influence) or age to perform certain skills, activity or actions within a confined stage or period of time (Waqas et al., 2013). It fosters and influences learning outcomes for children from primary schools and beyond (Mashburn & Pianta, 2016). It facilitates continuity and maintains learning expectations where students participate actively in classroom activities so as to have good learning outcomes (UNICEF, 2012; UNESCO, 2016).

Therefore, school readiness in this study will focus on investigating the influence of school readiness on students learning. Thus school variables i.e. (school heads, school boards and resources) will be examined. Teachers influence the students' cognitive (knowledge acquisition); memory retention of learned materials, understanding and comprehension of learned materials, problem solving skills, conceptualisation and categorization of ideas on learned materials and the development of social skills through interaction with peers with spirit of team work, interaction with teachers in and outside classroom in order to learn and succeed academically (Pitt et al., 2013).

In Nigeria, like other countries in Africa, school readiness is mainly perceived to be school preparation and students tasks to face academic learning (Ekundayo, 2010). Studies on school readiness have mainly focused on failure of students to grasp certain subject matters, mostly on kindergarten, nursery and primary school students and parental socio-economic status (Wagner, 2014; Freeman et al., 2015). School readiness influences students' cognitive and social skills needed for effective students learning, which is lacking in Nigeria. Students poor learning outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Nigeria, particularly in Adamawa state, has been a big concern to the government, parents, teachers and even students themselves Ekundayo, (2010) and Freeman et al. (2015), noted that government and educational agencies have made efforts to improve students' learning outcomes by fee waiver, provision of uniform through the universal basic education in 1999, teacher training and retraining, free school uniforms to primary and secondary schools students in addition to complete renovation of schools.

Adamawa state is one of the North Eastern states affected by the Boko Haram insurgency, where public properties and schools were burnt to ashes, students abducted and many displaced, and teachers had to leave their work places to rescue their lives (Freeman et al., 2015). It is feared that uncontrolled persistent of such insurgencies may affect students' academic performance by keeping them away from schools for longer periods. The quality of education does not only depend on

teachers as reflected in the performance of their duties, but also in the effective coordination of the school readiness and it's supporting environment on academic performance (Kagan& Rigby, 2013).

School heads influence students learning by encouraging cognitive and social skills in learning. Also, Ismail(2015) opined that students lack of social skills deter learning outcomes. Aminu (2012)hold the view that social skills enhance learning. Learning resources enhances learning outcomes (Mashburn & Pianta, 2016). Learning resources enhance student learning(Freeman et al., 2015). Therefore this study will investigate the Influence of Schools Readiness on Student's learning: A Case of Senior Secondary Students in Adamawa State

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, there has been persistent mass failure in Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) especially in Adamawa state, which has constituted a very poor academic performance. The factors responsible for this poor academic performance have been attributed to insecurity, harsh weather conditions, poor and inadequate classrooms, as well as high teacher students' ratio in the classrooms (Adeyemo, 2012; Kagan & Rigby, 2013) Most of the researches conducted were on early childhood education in the areas of day care and kindergarten, pre and primary schools (Wagner, 2014: Rimm-Kaufman & Hulleman, 2015).However, factors affecting senior secondary school readiness particularly by those that relate to school readiness such as schools heads, schools boards, resources, environment influences on students' learning outcomes cognitively and socially, have not been explored by previous studies.

Despite several efforts in provision of instructional materials, teacher training, enhanced salary package, and improvement of learning environment by stakeholders to improve school student's readiness and academic performance, the poor performance in National examinations still persist as shown by the results in

the tables. It is in this light that this study attempts to investigate the influence of senior secondary school readiness on students' cognitive and social skills to learning outcomes in Adamawa state, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

1. To determine the influence of teacher quality and experience in the development of cognitive and social skills in learning among students.
2. To explore the influence of teaching and learning resources on the development of cognitive and social skills in learning among students.

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Research Questions

1. How does teacher quality and experience influence the development of cognitive and social skills in learning among students?
2. How does teaching and learning resources influence the development of cognitive and social skills in learning among students?

Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between perspective of teacher and head teacher on positive effect of quality and experience teachers on the development of cognitive and social skills in learning among students

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between perspective of teacher and head teachers on positive influence of teaching and learning resources on the development of cognitive and social skills among students

LITERATURE REVIEW

School Readiness and its influence on students

School readiness is a strong tool in the enhancement of teaching and learning activities that influences student's learning outcomes (UNICEF, 2012). It involves aspects of student's stable social affective domain for sustainable attention and social relationships for cognitive ability. School readiness is regarded as a holistic way of looking at school preparedness for students learning in the school cognitively and socially for a better learning outcome (UNICEF, 2012).

Parents Influence on Students' Cognitive Abilities

Pitt et al. (2013) in their study found out that parents provide stimulating home environment for their children social support that influences their cognitive abilities in schools. School boards and head teacher's challenges are considered to be part of school readiness issues and strategies in enhancing students cognitive and social skills development is of a paramount importance (Mac, Epstein, Sheldon, & Fonseca, 2015). School boards ability to be active contributors to schools needs and students' demands will enhance learning outcome through proper cognitive and social skills

development. If parents and school heads are communicating with school personnel about academic programmes offered, it would have been more effective in enhancing learning outcomes of students (Wagner, 2014).

School Resources Influence on Students' Learning

In a study done in USA, it was observed that some of the notable factors that may influence students' cognitive and social skills development in learning in secondary schools are; school climate, instructional materials, discipline, physical facilities (Adeyemo, 2012), teacher quality, type of location of school and class size (Mace et al., 2015). Schools with good and conducive environment that has the best type of resources e.g., teachers, instructional materials and physical facilities will produce better school leavers with best learning outcomes (Kagan & Rigby, 2013).

School learning environment and its influence on students' learning

Environmental and cultural factors provide favourable learning atmosphere and accommodate interpersonal relationships free from violence and commotion (Rimm-Kaufman & Hulleman, 2015). It is assumed that students' performance is effectively achieved through collaboration with environment based on ecological models connecting the individuals and organizations (Wagner, 2014). A study on modern environment and satisfaction with schooling among primary school pupils in Ondo state, indicated that modern school environment emphasised adequate qualitative facilities promote learning and teaching processes (Mace et al., 2015). These modern facilities include; school building, adequate classrooms and instructional materials, libraries and laboratories, beautifications with trees and flowers. According to a study by Lawrence (2012) on school environment and academic achievement of standard 1X students, school environment boosted academic achievement of students and enhanced social ability, healthy status and moral values. Aminu (2012) reiterated that school environment comprises of school, peer group, media in relation to learning outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

Research approach

Mixed Method Research approach (Triangulation) will be used in this research because of its considerable ability to generate answers to the question what and how, as well as why questions

The Study Site

This study will be conducted in Adamawa State Yola central and Mubi North Senatorial Districts. Adamawa is in North Eastern part of Nigeria. Adamawa state is chosen because of its low students' academic performance. It is among the least performing states in Nigeria. Abia state, for example, has 68.45% score while Adamawa state had 8.75%.

Target population

The target population will be all the 202 public senior secondary schools within Yola Central and Mubi Senatorial Districts. It consisted of, 202 head teachers and 3216 teachers.

Sample and sample size

The sample size of the study was drawn from schools in Yola Central and Mubi North Senatorial Districts of the Adamawa State, Nigeria. The total sample for the study is 231 participants including 161 teachers and 70 head teachers.

Method of data analysis

Data were analysed using mean, standard deviation for answering research questions while the hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 significant level.

RESULTS

Research Questions 1:

How does teacher quality and experience influence the development of cognitive and social skills in learning among students?

Table 1: Effect of Teacher Quality and Experience on the Development of Cognitive and Social Skills in Learning among Students

S/n	Items	SA	A	Rmk
1	Teachers with more working experience can develop cognitive and social skills in their students	3.40	0.73	Agree
2	Teaching staff with more qualification are handy to influence cognitive and social skills among young students	2.69	0.19	Agree
3	Teachers that diversify in teaching and explanation of concept are good at developing cognitive skills among students	3.95	0.58	Agree
4	Teachers that adopt reflective teaching skills are good in developing cognitive and social skills in learning among students	3.48	0.78	Agree
	Grand average	3.38	0.57	

Table 1 presents the results on the perception of both teachers and head teachers on the effect of teacher quality and experience on the development of cognitive and social skills in learning among students in Adamawa state. The results showed that there was a unanimous agreement in the view by both teachers and head teachers about the fact that those teachers with more working experience can develop cognitive and social skills in the students (average = 3.40, Std. dev. = 0.73). Also, it was agree unanimously that teaching staff with more qualification are handy to influence cognitive and social skills among young students (average=2.69; Std. dev. = 0.19). Likewise, it was found that teachers that diversify in teaching and

explanation of concept are good at developing cognitive skills among students (average=3.95; std. dev. = 0.58). Also, both teacher and head teachers agreed to the assertion that those teachers that adopt reflective teaching skills are good in developing cognitive and social skills in learning among students (average = 3.48; Std. Dev. = 0.78). Furthermore, the overall grand average of 3.38, which is higher than 2.5 the accepted average established an unanimously agreement view between the teachers and head teachers in the study area about effectiveness of teacher quality and experience on the development of cognitive and social skills in students.

Research Question 2: How does teaching and learning resources influence the development of cognitive and social skills in learning among students?

Table 2: Influences of Teaching and Learning Resources on the Development of Cognitive and Social Skills in Learning among Students

S/n	Items	SA	A	Rmk
1	Those schools with physical structures are influencing development of cognitive and social skills in learning among students	2.71	1.18	Agree
2	Schools with instructional materials are capable to produce skilfully developed students	3.73	0.92	Agree
3	Those schools with modern learning equipment are developing cognitive and social skills in their students	2.86	1.03	Agree
4	School with library facility are developing cognitive and social skills in their students	2.87	0.92	Agree
	Grand average	3.04	1.01	

The results on Table 2 present the perspective of sampled teachers and head teachers on the influences of teaching and learning resources on the development of cognitive and social skills in learning among students. The results showed that both teachers and head teachers agreed to the assertion that those schools with physical

structures are influencing development of cognitive and social skills in learning among students (average= 2.71; std. dev.=1.18). More so, it was agreed that those schools with instructional materials are capable to produce skilfully developed students(average=3.73, std. dev. = 0.92). Likewise, More so, those schools with modern learning equipment are developing cognitive and social skills in their students (average = 2.86; std dev. 1.03). More so, the head teachers and teachers agreed that school with library facility are developing cognitive and social skills in their students (average = 2.87; std. dev. = 0.92). The grand average of 3.04 suggested that both the teachers and head teachers unanimously agreed that teaching and learning resources influence development of cognitive and social skills in learning among students.

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between perspective of teacher and head teacher on positive effect of quality and experience teachers on the development of cognitive and social skills in learning among students

Table 3: T-test analysis on perspective of teacher and head teachers on positive effect of quality and experience teachers on the development of cognitive and social skills in learning among students

Stat	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Head teacher	70	3.5281	.83759	.10011	.495	229	.621
Teachers	161	3.4677	.85838	.06765			

The t-test analysis on Table 3 revealed a t-test value 0.495, at degree of freedom of (df) 229 with p-value (0.621) > 0.05. Since, the calculated p-value is greater than hypothetical p-value 0.05, then the null hypothesis is rejected, implies that both teachers and head teacher hold unanimous agreement view about the fact that

quality and experience teachers play significant influence on the development of cognitive and social skills in learning among students

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H02: There is no significant difference between perspective of teacher and head teachers on positive influence of teaching and learning resources on the development of cognitive and social skills among students

Table 4: T-test analysis on perspective of teacher and head teachers on positive influence of teaching and learning resources on the development of cognitive and social skills among students

Stat	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Head teacher	70	3.6600	.71170	.08506	1.424	229	.156
Teachers	161	3.4928	.86256	.06798			

The t-test analysis on Table 4 revealed a t-test value 1.424, at degree of freedom of (df) 229 with p-value (0.621) > 0.05. Since, the calculated p-value is greater than hypothetical p-value 0.05, then the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that both teachers and head teacher hold unanimous agreement view about the fact that teaching and learning resources positively influenced development of cognitive and social skills among students.

Discussion

The findings from this study showed that there is positive effect of quality and experience teachers on the development of cognitive and social skills in learning among students. This could not unconnected with the fact that teachers are the executors of every educational policy which even when the educational policy is reviewed. This agreed with the submission made by Waqas et al. (2013) and Rimm-Kaufman and Hulleman (2015) that the responsibly of development of cognitive and social skills is hugely depend on teachers quality, the executors of educational policy. Also, the findings from this study showed school with teaching and learning resources do positively influenced development of cognitive and social skills among

students. This is agreed with the conclusion drawn by Wagner (2014) and Mace et al., (2015) that schools without learning resources could not boast of producing students with higher cognitive and social skills among students.

CONCLUSION

The study has reiterated the importance of school readiness on student preparation toward cognitive and social skills among students. It has been shown by the findings that qualitative teachers are the only ones that can adopt different teaching methods to impart on their students and develop cognitive and social skills among students. It has also been evident from the findings of this study that only those schools with needed learning resources could produce the required students with cognitive and social skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The educational management and concerned authorities should ensure that only qualified teachers are engaged in the teaching services to enhance the development of cognitive and social skills among students.
2. There should be consistent provision of learning facilities to ensure proper development of cognitive and social skills among students.

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