

STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN SOCIAL VICES AND SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of students' engagement in social vices on social studies students' academic performance in University of Calabar. Three research questions were raised and three null hypotheses were stated and tested at .05 level of significant. The study adopted ex-post-facto research design. The sample for the study comprised 200 social studies students of university of Calabar randomly selected from year one through year four in the department comprising 789 students. The instruments used for data collection were "Students' Engagement in Social Vices questionnaire (SESVQ)" and Essay- test questions based on the course outlines of each year taken from their semester examination, were used for data collection. The face and content validity of the instruments were determined by research experts and the reliability of instruments was also determined using Cronbach alpha reliability method with .78. Data collection was done by the researcher which were analysed using independent t-test analysis tested at .05 level of significance. The results of the Statistical analysis revealed that social vices such as deadly diseases, dangerous acts like engagement in illegal act such as cultism, act of smoking and taking of illegal substances, alcoholism, rape, robbery and others have significant effect on social studies students' academic performance in University of Calabar. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the responsibility of preventing or curbing general student vices in University should be a collective effort of the parents, lecturers, religious leaders, authorities of the Universities as well as the government. This can be done through appropriate upbringing, counselling and necessary sanctions in process of the students' formation.

Introduction

Good university education does not come by chance. It is a product of real lecturing and learning together with the effort of the students, the parents, the lecturers, the university authorities, and their numerous faculty and departmental heads. Often at times the responsibilities on the poor academic performance of students in Universities are shifted to the lecturers and the University authorities. Most people in our society seem not to give adequate consideration to the education of their children and sometimes parents have erroneous opinion about the performance of their children in the universities, they do not know and seem to fulfill their role of guidance and encouragement right from the home in the child's performance in the university. Some people also have the notion that the mass failure or success in universities could be attributed to the lecturers and the university authorities alone; while other people see students' engagement in social vices within and outside the Universities as an effect to the students' poor academic performance. However, some research works have exposed that the academic performance of the students is a point strength of both the Universities authorities and that of the parents in different tertiary institutions, it is rare to find a school or an institution void of social vices,

this depicts that these vices are present in all educational centers be it primary, secondary and tertiary institutions (Dishion, Andrew, Spracklen and Patterson, 2010). Vice is a latin word “vitium” meaning defect or failing. Elsewhere, Smithson Amato and Pearle (2011) see vice as a bad habit or immoral activities. Vice according to these authors are common among youth males and females which include prostitution, indecent dressing, robbery, cultism, pocket picking, ceasing of phones from new students (year 1) and asking them to redeem their phones with some amount of money, drug addiction, rape, examination malpractice, hooliganism, thuggery, gambling, smoking, pre-marital sexual activities and boycotting of classes. Social vices are bad traits, unhealthy and negative behaviours of the society (MA, 2008, Magney, 2009; and Nye, 2009). Some students in universities perform leading roles as students’ union government leaders, class representatives, association leaders, leaders of clubs and so on. These positions make them stand out as role models for other students. A student whether male or female who performs leadership role in the University is expected to help the lecturers in particular and University authorities in general to maintain discipline, encourage academic excellence in departments, faculties and various units of the school to promote a viable student-lecturer relationship. Unfortunately the problem of students’ engagement in social vices has outweighed good morals such that the contributions of students who play leadership role had no much impact on character formation of the other students (Ifaturoti, 2010). It becomes more disheartening when we observe students involvement in destructive practices and truancy in school. Peer pressure is considered the major cause of youth involvement in social vices. Students spend more time with their friends at school or at home. Due to their weak nature and tender age, they can easily be influenced by the behaviours of their peers. Children have a high level of curiosity to learn, to have fun and practice new things such as trying to smoke, taking illegal substances, drinking, having sexual intercourse in order to experiment and prove to their peers that they can equally do same. A proverb says “show me your friend and I will tell you who you are” simple signifies the significance of friends and how they influence one another. A student tends to behave like his peers so that he will not be labeled cowards like “JJC”, “uncivilized”, “village or local” person based on the students’ language. A student who moves with students that perform poorly academically can be like them in no time and will be lured to the shortcuts to success such as examination malpractice (Igbimoria, 2012). He added that being a virgin, which was once a thing of pride has now turned into an object of ridicule among both male and female students. In most homes and Universities, children express their anger by vandalizing household and school properties respectively. Some children run away from home and even stop attending lectures when persuaded to live a decent life. They are seen roaming around the streets, cities and across the nations of the earth for prostitution, cultism and engagement in other illegal acts such as rape, hooliganism and so on instead of staying at home to help their parents perform home duties and at the same time go to school. All these social vices inherent in the society affect students’ performance in social studies in universities. Social vices affect the society as a whole and the individual in particular. The mental, physical, academic and moral aspects of an individual are negatively affected. Students divert their times to these social vices instead of being serious with their academic works. There is wastage of time in irrelevant matters that cause distractions and this leads to poor academic performance on the parts of the students. In the process of this involvement, deadly diseases can be contacted by the students, this determines the lives and career of such students. Dangerous acts like cultism are rampant in the Universities (Crig and Nidol, 2012). Students’ involvement in secret cults exposes them to other forms of illegal acts such as smoking, alcoholism, rape, taking illegal substances, hooliganism, thuggery and other forms of vices. In the process they may lose their lives in fights or when there is a clash with an opposing cult(s) and some may be rusticated from schools and may contact deadly diseases which affect their performance in social studies. It is against this background that this research was conducted to examine the effect of students’ engagement in social vices on social studies students’ academic performance in University of Calabar. Kurt Lewin propounded a field theory in 1945, where he explored the situational determinant of behavior. He developed the formula that behavior (B) is a function (F) of a person (P) and his environment (University) E. thus, $B=F(PE)$. In this formulation P and E are considered as being interdependent variables. It is this formulation that provides the foundation for his theoretical constructs of life space, which of course refers to the sum of all the environmental and personal factors in interaction. The theory is based on assumption that if students live and learn in unhealthy environment that is environment full of vices such as drug addiction, drug abuse, aggressiveness, robbery, rape and truant behaviour, there are bound to be every likelihood that their lives will be characterized by one form of instability that will affect their academic performance or the lives of these students in general. The position of Lewin is that an adolescents’ behavior or learning is a combined product of environment valences (University) and his personality factors. He further maintains that some environmental forces are personal factors on the adolescents. If these personal factors are good they can fairly and comfortably accommodate the challenges arising from them, but when these combined forces are changing rapidly and are very demanding, the student undergoes physiological torments, a sort of storm and stress which has an overt pressure on his behavior. The relevant of Kurt Lewin’s field theory to this work is that the University environment and student interaction play a significant role in the students’ academic performance. The main problem of this study was the alarming increase in poor social studies students’ academic performance in universities. University Education is the

bedrock of any advancement one makes in life. Yet people finish university education and still behave as if they have never seen the four walls of University. In recent times, the result and productivity of our social studies student in universities have been very discouraging. Despite the fact that social studies curriculum tilted towards producing good citizens that will interact well in his environment, students performance in the social studies as a course is not commensurate to the expectation of the parents, teachers and even the stakeholders in education. Several efforts made by the university authorities, the ministry of education and government at both the state and the federal government level in an attempt to lift the general performance of the students ranging from equipping the universities and departmental libraries with quality textbooks in social studies, award of scholarships to the best performing student in the subject, putting of task force in the campuses as well as departments to ensure lecturers go to the lecture hall to lecture their students are all efforts put in place to ensure high performance of students and yet they still perform below expectation. These efforts by the government and the school authorities ought to have changed the poor performance of the students in both semester and degree examinations. This ordinarily might be achieved if there have been a complementary effort on the part of students and parents too. The researcher is therefore poised to ask: to what extent does students' engagement in social vices affect social studies students' academic performance in University of Calabar? This was the problem which this study sought to address.

Purpose of the study

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of students' engagement in social vices on social studies students' academic performance in University of Calabar, specifically, the study sought to:

- i. find out if deadly diseases have any significant effect on social studies students' academic performance.
- ii. find out if dangerous acts like engagement in cultism have significant effect on social studies students' academic performance
- iii. find out if illegal acts (like smoking, alcoholism, rape, robbery, taking illegal substances) have any significant effect on social studies students' academic performance.

Research questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. To what extent does deadly diseases affect social studies students' academic performance?
- ii. To what extent does dangerous acts like engagement in cultism affect social studies students' academic performance?
- iii. To what extent does illegal acts like smoking, alcoholism, rape, robbery, taking illegal substances affect social studies students' academic performance?

Statement of hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested:

- i. Deadly diseases have no significant effect on social studies students' academic performance
- ii. Dangerous acts like cultism have no significant effect on social studies students' academic performance.
- iii. Illegal acts (such as smoking alcoholism, rape, robbery and taking illegal substances) have no significant effect on social studies students' academic performance.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was ex-post facto design. This design was chosen for the study because the researcher does not have any direct control of the independent variables because their manipulations had already occurred and the researcher merely observes the independent variables in retrospect of their possible relations and effect on the dependent variables. The sample for the study comprised 200 social studies students randomly selected from year one to year four in the department of social science education of social studies unit, university of Calabar, Cross River State. This sample was taken from the social studies students' population of 789 students. A simple random sampling was used to select fifty students (50) from each level in social studies unit. The instruments used in data collection for the study were "Students' Engagement in Social Vices Questionnaire (SESVQ)" which measured the independent variables of the study, (deadly diseases, dangerous acts as cultism, illegal acts). The other instrument was an essay-test questions based on the course outline of social studies at all the levels. This was designed by the researcher and administered on two hundred social studies students in the department of social science education, social studies unit of the University of Calabar. They were expected to answer four (4) questions out of the six (6) questions given. This examination was administered by the help of their course lecturers. The examination was chosen to ensure that the factors that could positively influence their performance like motivation achievement need and anticipated rewards were at their peak and examination equally ensured that the proper testing conditions were strictly followed. At the end

of the examination both instruments were scored. SESVQ was scored according to a 4-point likert scale type (SA, A, D, SD) while the essay-test questions were scored according to the marking scheme which was designed and moderated. To ensure that the essay-test marking was consistent, all the marked scripts were vetted by another examiner. The raw scores were added to obtain their total score matching it with each level.

Presentation of result

The results of the investigation are presented according to the research hypotheses of the study

Hypothesis one

Deadly diseases have no significant effect on social studies students’ academic performance

The independent variable in this hypothesis was deadly diseases while the dependent variable was social studies students’ academic performance. In testing this hypothesis, the students in the sample were categorized into two groups based on their scores in deadly diseases and the groups were formed on the following score ranges for easy analysis.

Group 1: low deadly diseases – (1 - 10)

Group 2: high deadly diseases – (11 - 20)

They were then subjected to independent t-test analysis and the results of the analysis are presented in Table 1

TABLE 1

Independent t-test analysis of effect of deadly disease on social studies students’ academic performance. (N = 200)

Deadly diseases	N	\bar{X}	SD	tcal.	tcrit
High deadly diseases	150	15.94	5.24	2.12	1.96
Low deadly disease	50	15.40	5.31		
Total	200				

*P < .05, df = 198

The results of the analysis in Table I gave a calculated t-value of 2.12, the value was found to be higher than the critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 level of significance with 198 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that deadly diseases have a significant effect on social studies students’ academic performance.

Hypothesis Two

Dangerous acts like engagement in cultism have no significant effect on social studies students’ academic performance.

The independent variable in this hypothesis was dangerous acts like cultism while the dependent variable was social studies students’ academic performance. In testing this hypothesis, the same procedure used in testing hypothesis one was also employed. The students in the sample were categorized into two groups based on their scores in dangerous acts. See Table 2.

TABLE 2

Independent t-test analysis of effect of dangerous acts (like cultism) on social studies students’ academic performance (N = 200)

Dangerous acts (like cultism)	N	\bar{X}	SD	tcal	tcrit
High engagement in cultism	174	16.69	5.11	2.06	1.96
Low engagement in cultism	26	14.37	5.38		
Total	200				

*p < .05, df = 198

The result of the analysis in Table 2 gave a calculated t-value of 2.06. This value was found to be higher than the critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 level of significance with 198 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is a significant effect of dangerous acts like engagement in cultism on social studies students’ academic performance.

Hypothesis three

Illegal acts (like smoking, alcoholism, rape, robbery, taking of illegal substances) have no significant effect on social studies students’ academic performance.

The independent variable in this hypothesis was illegal acts while social studies students’ academic performance constituted the dependent variable. The same procedure in testing hypothesis one was adopted here. The results are organized and presented in Table 3

TABLE 3

Independent t-test analysis of effect of illegal acts on social studies students' academic performance (N = 200).

Illegal acts	N	X	SD	tcal	tcrit
High engagement in illegal acts	155	15.97	5.18	2.21	1.96
Low engagement in illegal acts	45	14.06	5.04		
Total	200				

*p< .05, df =198

The result of the analysis in Table 3 gave a calculated t-value of 2.21. This value was found to be higher than the critical t-value of 1.96. at .05 level of significance with 198 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was again rejected. This means that students engagement in illegal acts such as smoking of dangerous substance, have a significant effect on social studies students' academic performance.

Discussion of findings

The finding from testing hypothesis one has shown that deadly diseases have a significant effect on social studies students' academic performance. This is particularly so because deadly disease can lead to the termination of lives. A pregnant student will face emotional and psychological trauma which will make her lose focus and attention on her studies. The findings of this hypothesis exposed us to the fact that a student who moves with students with poor academic performance can be like them in no time and will be lured to the shortcuts to success such as examination malpractice.

The finding from testing hypothesis two revealed that dangerous acts like engagement in cultism have a significant effect on social studies students' academic performance. This is so because to the cultists, cult activities are their priority while any other things in life including their studies are becoming secondary. The finding of this study is in agreement with the opinion of Crig and Nidol (2013) who reported that dangerous acts like cultism are very rampant in Universities. Many students join cult not because they like it but because they are lured while some are forced to join it. It was further found out that from the study that most members of these secret associations are from rich homes.

The finding from testing hypothesis three also revealed that other forms of illegal acts such as smoking, alcoholism, rape, taking of illegal substances (e.g cocaine's, Indian hems), hooliganism, thuggery and others have a significant effect on social studies students' academic performance. It is so because being in a secret cult exposes a child to the above mentioned illegal acts. The finding of this hypothesis is consistent with the findings of Charbonneau (2007) who disclosed that cultists may lose their lives in fights or when there is a clash with an opposing cult and some may be rusticated from school.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, since it is rare to find a school or an institution void of social vices it was concluded that deadly diseases, dangerous acts like cultism as well as other forms of illegal acts such as smoking, alcoholism, rape, robbery, taking of illegal substances among others, all have significant effects on social studies students' academic performance in University of Calabar.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Social vices in Universities need to be curbed. Students that engage in these dangerous acts need advice, help and rehabilitation for the addicted ones.
- ii. Parents need to know their children's friends, status and their academic performances even when in tertiary institutions not only in primary and post primary levels of education.
- iii. Mothers should be close to their children. Close monitoring and time should be given to the youths by parents, this will enable them detect abnormal behaviour in their children on time.
- iv. Children should be taught the moral values and the word of God at home this might go a long way in reducing peer influence when they live the home; and thus the problem of students' poor performance in social studies might be reduced.
- v. The school authority and the government should always organize forums like seminars by departments and faculties that will enlighten the students about the dangers associated with social vices.
- vi. Police must be active and be on alert. Universities should have a high level of discipline and also maintain a disciplined security force.
- vii. Any student seen as a threat to others should be cautioned and rehabilitated. All hands must be on deck to combat the social menace common to students in tertiary institutions.

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