

## **The Influence of Environmental and Personal Factors on Kwara State Secondary School Students' Educational Outcome**

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**Abstract:** This study is concerned with the influence of environmental and personal factor on Kwara State secondary school students educational outcome. Using the responses from a sample of 750 students in randomly selected junior secondary school from each of the delimited urban, semi-urban and rural areas of the state with the results of their terminal examination, the results showed that there were significant differences ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) among the three sets of students. The urban secondary students out-performed the semi-urban and the rural secondary students in their educational outcome. The researcher, therefore suggested that rather than uniformity, the educational goal should be diversified educational opportunities with maximum individual opportunity for finding the right niche and the reality of the individual differences and differences in cultural environment need not and should not mean reward for some and frustration for others.

**Key words:** Environmental factors, educational outcome, student, secondary school, personal factors, Kwara State, Nigeria

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Education is generally regarded as a major indicator of a community's social well-being, standard of living and social justice. In an effort to define and measure levels of living on an international scale, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (1966-1970) recognized eight variables in addition to education as social indicators. In his study on social well-being in the United States, Smith (1973) recognized seven sets of variables: Education, income and employment, the living environment, health, social order, social belonging and recreation and leisure. The general recurrence of education on the list of major indicators of social justice run could be said to confirm that education is a powerful instrument of developing intellectual abilities of shaping cultural attitudes and acquiring knowledge and skills (Oyebanji, 1980). Both directly and indirectly, education is therefore, important for acquiring social well-being because of its close association with other factors of social well-being.

In Nigeria as a whole education is highly rated in the National Development Plans. Nigerian's philosophy of education, therefore is based on the integration of the individual into sound and effective citizen and Equal Education Opportunities (Capitals mine), National policy on education. Like all other states in Nigeria, Kwara State believes in the objective of building a justice and egalitarian society and shares the desire that each part of the whole should progress economically, educationally

and socially as other parts. It is justified that one examines the educational outcome of the secondary school students as an insight into the issue of equality of educational opportunities.

**Purpose of the study:** Even when it is universally accepted by the various world nations that the ultimate goal of economic and social development is the welfare of the individual in equality has always existed. For instance, Oyebanji (1980) reported from his study that Kwara State Social Policy pronouncement notwithstanding using the indices which include level of achievement in the West African school certificate examination, pupil-teacher ratio and enrolment in adult education programme, there still exist inequality.

Since education is a sensitive and universally chosen social well-being of the individual, the purpose of this study, therefore is to examine the pattern of educational outcome of the Kwara State junior secondary school students in terms of rural and urban, intellectual ability, Socio-Economic Status (SES) attitude to education, teacher's qualification, teacher's experience, teachers' instructional activities, teachers co-curricular activities and teachers effectiveness.

**Significance of the study:** In addressing the issue of distributive equality in educational opportunities, this study was designed to investigate the profile of differences within junior secondary school students

educational outcome and their social background in Kwara State. In the light of the above statement, the following research questions were raised:

- What is the profile of the three sets of Kwara State Junior Secondary School Students with respect to educational outcome in the standardized achievement test conducted by the Kwara State Ministry of Education In 1987?
- What is the profile of the three sets of the Junior secondary school students with respect to the environmental and personal variables used in the study

**Review of the related literature:** The realization that both biological and environmental factors play an important part in determining the admission, achievement and persistence of college students was strengthened after the World War II when it became apparent that students were applying in larger numbers than could be accommodated. As more students entered colleges from a greater range of economic levels, many colleges and ministries became more selective in their clientele thus discouraging or eliminating students from lower level of economic homes and channelling them into certain types of schools. With such awareness, researches on the inter-relationship between home environment and personal variables with educational outcomes in all parts of the world have attracted the attention of psychologists, social scientists and teachers. The series of educational journals such as Comparative Education, Harvard Educational Review, American Journal of Society, Culture and Environment, Urban Affairs, Nigerian Educational Research Association Journal, West African Journal of Education and Nigerian Journal of Psychology and the establishment of Internal centre for educational evaluation have attested to the growing interest in education correlates.

But the fierce debate on the effectiveness of schools dated from 1966 with the publication in the United States of the government sponsored study of equality of educational opportunity. The Coleman Report on equality of educational opportunity published in 1966 aroused more controversy than any other education report. At Harvard, a distinguished group of social scientists has conducted an ambitious inter-disciplinary re-assessment of the report. Beginning as a small faculty seminar in the 1966-69 academic years, it expanded to include nearly sixty sociologists, psychologists, economists, statisticians, law professors and interested persons from government, testing organizations and Carnegie Foundation which funded the seminar and other

re-analysis of the Coleman Report (Mostella and Moynihan, 1972). Similar to the Coleman Report was in England, the research of the Central Advisory Council on Education which was published in 1967 in two volumes under the name of the Plowden Report.

Generally speaking, researchers such as Adell (2002), Caplan (2002), De La Fuente (2002), Stephen and William (2006), Gencilucci (2004), Hill *et al.* (2005) and Ibtesam (2010) have written and researched extensively on environment and personal factors on students educational outcomes. With regard to the Nigerian home environment, Abiri (1965), Obemeata (1970), Yoloye (1971), Okunrotifa (1972), Ipaye (1975), Bakare (1972), Odebunmi (1983), Zaku (1983), Abdullahi (1984) and Onocha (1985) to mention but a few have concerned themselves with how environmental and personal factors have influenced the educational outcomes of the Nigerian school children in various way Obemeata (1970) reported that cultural environment of the high socio-economic home was more favourable for intellectual development than in low socio-economic home background. Yoloye (1971) opined that African sample from low socio-economic home had little or no intellectual support at home. This fact reflected itself on their poorer academic performances.

Similarly, Bakare (1972) said that African children experience difficulties in pattern perception, in visualization, in three-dimensional perception and in their degree of susceptibility to certain illusions. The deficits, he explained, one often revealed while comparing upper, middle class subjects with lower class, rural or illiterate subjects. Also, Onocha (1985) reported the five variables of education and occupation of parent's academic materials possession, sibling size and gender of pupils were significant individual predictors of the science achievement of the pupils. These studies have established the fact that Nigerian children from different social background do not generally achieve the same degree of academic success.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The research was designed as an Ex-post Facto Comparative Study. The researcher investigated the environmental and personal variables with students educational outcome as they had occurred rather than creating these manifestations. The research respondents were 750 students sampled from the selected 15 secondary schools in Kwara State by means of stratified and clustered sampling techniques. The area of study was stratified into urban, semi-urban and rural areas.

There were 26 secondary schools in urban areas, 42 in semi-urban area and 244 in rural areas within these groups of schools; five schools were selected by simple randomisation from each to make 15 schools in all.

**Instrumentation:** The instrument used include Rawen Standard Progressive Matrices to measure students intellectual ability, Osgood's Semantic Differential to measure students attitude to education, socio-economic status scale, students Assessment of Teachers Effectiveness Instrument (SATEI) Teacher, questionnaires and the 1987 junior secondary school final Examination results. All the instruments were well validated.

**Statistics:** Analysis of variance statistical procedure was used to analyse the data collected.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results in Table I show that except in the variable of attitude to education ( $X_3$ ) ( $F = 1.439$ ) and ( $X_4$ ) teacher qualification ( $F = 0.966$ ), there are significant differences among the three sets of senior secondary school students in the other seven research variables. The urban group almost consistently recorded higher mean scores than the other groups. In the case of teachers co-curricular activities ( $X_7$ ) where the urban and rural groups are at par, both scored higher than the semi-urban group.

The basic interest here was to identify whether there is any significant difference among the three sets of students in the independent and dependent variables. The results revealed that there are significant differences among the three sets of students in intellectual ability ( $F = 8.974$ ); socio-economic status ( $F = 9.736$ ); teachers experiences ( $F = 3.497$ ); teachers instructional activities ( $F = 12.677$ ); teachers co-curricular activities ( $F = 4.824$ ); teacher effectiveness ( $F = 9.99$ ) and

educational outcome ( $F = 22.473$ ). In these reported significant differences among the three sets of students, the urban students excel the other sets of students.

These research findings conform to other research findings of Obemeata (1970), Odebunmi (1983) and Abdullahi (1984) that the urban secondary school students being from high socio-economic status homes and also have attended good schools were in more favourable situation than the other Nigerian children from rural and low socio-economic status homes.

It is however observed that in the variables of teachers co-curricular activities and teachers instructional activities the students in the rural areas have higher means ( $X = 111.34$ ) than their counterparts in the semi-urban and urban areas only with means of 125.76 and 109.04, respectively. The possible interpretation could be that in the rural schools because of their proximity to the Ministry of Education Headquarters and of course some surprise visit by some of the Ministry Officials to these schools, the teacher in the urban secondary schools is constantly alert to their responsibilities. Again, in the rural areas where there are no such facilities, the few secondary schools appear to offer a better place of leisure to the teachers, thereby giving them much contact with their students enough time to prepare their instructional materials. In the semi-urban areas, the officials of the Ministry of Education are a bit far away, the school authorities are often notified of any official visits. Not only is this, in the semi-urban areas there relatively growing social facilities such as clubs, public drinking places and film houses. These social facilities may therefore, serve as deterrents to the teacher-student contact and in some respects, the adequate preparation of instructional materials.

Noteworthy, however is that regardless of these advantages of teachers co-curricular activities and teachers instructional activities of the secondary schools in rural areas, over and above those in the semi-urban, the latter out-performed the students in the rural areas. The means scores in educational outcome for semi-urban and rural secondary students are  $F = 102.09$  and  $F = 96.63$ , respectively. This finding again tallies with the findings of Balogun (1976) that:

...The facilities available in the rural areas necessarily restrict the capacity of the schools to give the best education even though the teachers are very willing to do their best

One of the most interesting features of the analysis was the finding that in attitude to education, there is no significant difference in the educational attitudes of the three sets the secondary school students involved in the

Table 1: Summary of one way analysis of variance

Variables	Group means			DF	F-ratio	p-level
	U	SU	R			
$X_1$	46.09	42.65	20.80	2/742	8/974	0.000*
$X_2$	59.29	54.96	30.72	2/742	9.736	0.000*
$X_3$	224.41	224.47	220.28	2/742	1.439	0.236
$X_4$	7.85	7.00	6.84	2/95	0.966	0.386
$X_5$	3.08	2.29	1.55	2/95	3.495	0.030*
$X_6$	135.08	125.76	128.04	2/742	12.677	0.000*
$X_7$	113.38	109.04	113.34	2/742	4.824	0.008*
$X_8$	252.85	238.01	243.63	2/742	9.999	0.000*
$X_9$	111.88	102.09	96.63	2/473	22.473	0.000*

$X_1$  = Intellectual ability,  $X_2$  = Socio-economic status,  $X_3$  = Attitude to education,  $X_4$  = Teacher's qualification,  $X_5$  = Teacher's experience,  $X_6$  = Teacher's instructional activities,  $X_7$  = Teacher's co-curricular activities,  $X_8$  = Teacher's effectiveness,  $X_9$  = Educational outcome, U = Urban, SU = Semi-Urban, R = Rural

study. This finding also conforms to the findings of Abiri (1965) that the Nigerian pupils represented by his sample were favourably inclined towards school and education. It is well known that educational escalator appears to carry a person upward with more public approval than other escalators. Inference could be drawn that the under-represented of the low socio-economic status within the upper reaches of Kwara State education system and the gross differences observed in the geographical distribution among the LGAs in the state can by no means be attributed to poor attitude to education.

In gross terms, it is possible therefore to point to variant patterns of responses to the introduction of Western education in Kwara State. Because, unlike the predominantly Christian settlements of the state where the most usual result of the introduction of Western education is a process of status in the predominantly Muslim settled areas, the process of status reinforcement is assumed to ensue which guaranteed continuity in the recruitment of dominant groups. This point should therefore be of great concern to us in a policy that preaches equality of educational opportunity.

### CONCLUSION

The researcher, however noted that the problems of inequality in educational opportunity may in most modern societies be an inevitable aspect of the human condition. At least currently existing society seems to have totally eliminated it. It is still my humble opinion that rather than uniformity, the educational goal should be that of diversified educational opportunities with maximum individual opportunity for finding the right niche and that the reality of individual differences and differences in the cultural environment need not and should not mean rewards for some and frustration for others.

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