Effect of Lateness to Classes on Academic Performance of Students: A Study of Federal Polytechnic Nekede

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A b s t r a c t

Education is fundamental to any meaningful development process. It is a lifelong learning process which seeks to transform the individual and society. It has been posited that no country can achieve sustainable economic development without substantial investment in human capital (Okoronkwo, Egwuatu, 2010). Education enriches people's understanding of themselves and the world. It improves the quality of their lives and leads to broad social benefits of individuals and society. Education raises people's productivity and creativity and promotes entrepreneurship and technological advances. In addition, it plays a very crucial role in securing economic and social progress and improving income distribution (Ozturk, Ilhan, 2001). However, the path to the acquisition of knowledge involves a lot part of which is tertiary education. The attitude of students in attendance to classes calls for caution, a total overhaul and re-orientation. Lateness to classes is rampant and has been touted as the basis of academic excellence or failure. This study examined the effect of lateness to classes on the academic performance of students in tertiary institutions. The Federal Polytechnic Nekede was studied as a representation of tertiary institutions. Yamane Taro's formula was adopted in selecting the sample size of 250 made up of 75 academic staff and 175 students. The study employed the use of Regression Analysis in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. A Correlation Co-efficient (r) of 0.9077 and Coefficient of Determination (r^2) of 0.823919 indicated that lateness to classes greatly affects students' performance in examinations. It is the view of this study that appropriate legislation for reward of punctuality and attendance to classes and punishment for lateness and absenteeism be provided for improved academic performance of students.

Background to the Study

Going to school is a privilege to many Africans especially in Nigeria. Prior to independence in 1960 only 5 percent of school age children had the opportunity and privilege of attending classes. Secondary schools were few with the number of students abysmally low. There was not even a university then. The earliest tertiary institutions in Nigeria were the Yaba Higher College established in 1932, the University College Ibadan 1948, University in Nigeria Nsukka 1960, and the Ahmadu Bello University 1960 (Okoronkwo and Egwutu, 2010). However, with improvement in technology, a better standard of living and greater exposure to the benefits of education, more tertiary institutions have been established that more people now can afford to send their children to school. Federal Polytechnic Nekede was established by the government of Imo State in 1978 as a College of Technology but later became a Federal Polytechnic.

The main purpose of being in school is to learn. Routines are placed precisely based on subject time table and duty roster to help people focus on learning. Lectures are expected to be organized, scheduled, structured and predictable. Lateness, being the fact of happening or arriving after the planned, expected, usual, or necessary time; coming, occurring, continuing or remaining after the correct, usual or expected time means that there is always a time set for the start of an activity. Lateness manifests immediately that time is reached and the activity thereafter commences without the person being present. Lateness occurs in all facets of life – work and career place, religious and worship, family and friends; personal development, marriage ceremony, fellowship and classes among others.

Literature Review

Education remains a viable tool for national development without which the task of nation building would be almost impossible. Beida (2019), recognizes that calls to recognize education as a fundamental human right owing to its importance has been raging for quite some time. As a process of systematic training and instruction designed to transmit knowledge, acquire skills, potentials and abilities such that an individual will contribute efficiently to the growth and development of his society and nation, education presents the spring box for the much sought-after better life.

Kazeem and Ige (2013), Osundare (2009) and Almendarez (2011), recognize that tertiary education is the supreme light-giver, the breezy dawn after a night of suffocating darkness as well as a path in the jungle and a mechanism through which the society generates the knowledge and skills required for its survival and sustenance. Tertiary education among other tiers is the most important level of education institution in Nigeria that provides stability in the various sectors of the economy through its key functions of teaching, learning, research and development. It is this level of education that assists the government in re-positioning the economy through the provision of adequate manpower and requisite personnel. Notwithstanding the number of tertiary institutions in the country, not much progress has been made in Nigeria compared to other developing countries. This has been attributed to deficient infrastructure, academic instability,

educational policies inadequate funding and most devastatingly, lateness to classes. According to Olorunleke (2003), these bottlenecks have put a limit on the level of breakthroughs in the various tertiary institutions in Nigeria. In consequence thereof, several policy documents have been developed to help steer the course of education in Nigeria.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) which was published in 1977 but revised in 1990 established Nigeria's vision of education as an instrument for national development where government relies on education as a springboard for its development and reform agenda. This is reflected in the emphatic resonance that "no nation can rise above the quality of its education system" and outlined five main national objectives to include a free and democratic society; a just egalitarian society; a united, strong and self-reliant nation; a great and dynamic economy; and a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens. The extent to which the objectives of the National Policy on Education have been met remains a mirage.

According to the National Policy on Education (2004) tertiary education is expected to:
 a) Contribute to National development, through high level relevant manpower training;
 b) Develop and articulate proper values for the survival of the individuals and society;
 c) Develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;
 d) Acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society;
 e) Promote and encourage scholarship and community service;
 f) Forge and cement national unity; and
 g) Promote national and international understanding and interaction.

A United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report of 2014 tells a very sad tale of Nigeria's education with the worst education indicators globally. According to the report, Nigeria has the largest out-of-school children in Africa (10.5 million). The report also identified inequality and education costs as indices that have contributed to the credible evidence on the deplorable state of education. The report further indicates that in "teaching and learning", and "achieving equality for all", Nigeria is among the 37 countries that have low return on investment from education because children are not learning. One consequence of this learning gap is the performance in examinations.

The Federal Polytechnic, Nekede is a federal government-owned higher institution located in Nekede, Imo State. Established in 1978 by the Imo State government as College of Technology it became a federal government institution and was renamed "The Federal Polytechnic, Nekede". Currently, it has six faculties as well as offer part time programs.

Fig. 1: Federal Polytechnic Nekede

Research Methodology

The Federal Polytechnic Nekede was studied as a representation of tertiary institutions. Yamane Taro's formula was adopted in selecting the sample size of 232 made up of 75 academic staff and 175 students. The study employed the use of Regression Analysis in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Lecturers and students were randomly selected from the schools (faculties) of the institution. A controlled experiment was conducted to test a single variable at a time. The variable tested being the *independent variable*, was adjusted to see the effects on the system being studied. In this study lateness to classes was the independent variable. The *controlled variables* were held constant to minimize or stabilize their effects on the subject.

This study employed content validity and construct validity. Respondents were required to verbalize their thoughts which were recorded and coded according to the driven category more so, as the subject of lateness to classes and examination performance are prevalent in our tertiary institutions. Precautionary measures were taken to refrain from asking leading questions in the questionnaires and interview schedules. These are questions that could suggest answers and lead erroneously to hypothesis guessing and evaluation apprehension.

Population and sample of the study

Michaelbarry (2019) established the population of Federal Polytechnic Nekede to be 16,381 as at February, 2019. At a Mean of 50, standard deviation of 25 and a confidence level of 90%, the minimum sample was 69. However with a sample size of 232 as determined, the margin of error was 2.69 Spiegel and Stephen (2006) observed that any sample size of above 30 is a large sample. Indeed our sample size of 232 is large but considered appropriate for the nature of the study.

Sources of Data
Data were obtained from two principal sources of primary and secondary. Primary data were those collected originally that is first hand while secondary data were collected by someone else but referred and used in this study.

Questionnaires, direct observations and interview schedules, visits to classrooms, examination of class attendance and collated results from Examinations Unit of the Registry department were used in collecting primary data while journal articles, text books, magazines and other publications formed the background of secondary sources.

Methods of Data Analysis
Analysis of data explored three steps of preparation, use of descriptive statistics and use of inferential statistics. This is in line with Trochim (2006) suggestions on research methodology. Correlation and Regression Analyses were employed in the analysis of the data. These were done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.

Presentation and Analysis of Data
Presentation
Table 1: Gender

Category	Male	Female	Total
Respondents	144	88	232
Percentage	63	37	100

Table 2: Age

Category	Under 20 yrs.	20-29 yrs.	30–39 yrs.	40–49 yrs.	50–59 yrs.	Above 60 yrs.	Total
Response	5	124	65	24	11	3	232
Percentage	2.16	53.45	28.02	10.34	4.74	1.29	100

Table 3: Marital Status

Category	Single	Married	Widowed	Separated	Total
Response	181	46	4	1	232
Percentage	78.02	19.83	1.72	0.43	100

Table 4: Qualifications

Category	SSCE	HND/BSC	MBA/MSC	PHD	OTHERS	TOTAL
Response	157	29	36	3	7	232
Percentage	67.67	12.50	15.52	1.29	3.02	100

Table 5: Lateness to classes and academic performance of students

| Category	Under 20 yrs.	20-29 yrs.	30 – 39 yrs.	40 – 49 yrs.	50 – 59 yrs.	Above 60 yrs.	Total
YES	3	90	57	20	7	2	179
NO	2	34	8	4	4	1	53
Total	5	124	65	24	11	3	232

Analysis

Restated, data collected were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The information collated in Table 5 were subjected to assessment.

Table 6.

Category	Under 20 yrs.	20-29 yrs.	30-39 yrs.	40– 49 yrs.	50 – 59 yrs.	Above 60 yrs.	Total
YES	3	90	57	20	7	2	179
NO	2	34	8	4	4	1	53
Total	5	124	65	24	11	3	232

Fig. 2: Lateness to classes and academic performance of students
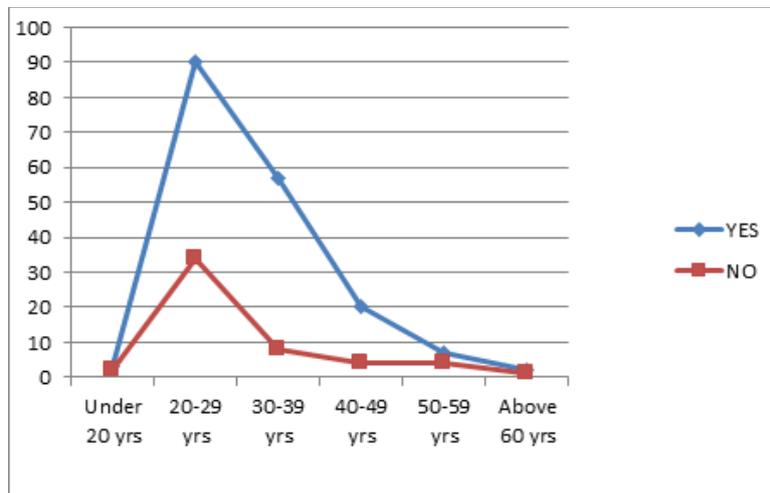
The value of correlation coefficient using calculated Mean of:

"YES" = 29.833; "NO" = 8.833. Therefore, R=0.9077. and Coefficient of Determination (r^2) of 0.823919.

The correlation coefficient result of 0.9077 and Coefficient of Determination (r^2) of 0.823919 indicate that there is a very strong positive correlation between lateness to classes and academic performance of students. With R score @ 0.9077 the p value is 0.12386 and at $p<0.05$, the result is significant and thus supports the statement that Lateness to classes affects academic performance of students.

Conclusion

Our study has been invaluable in establishing that the more students come late to classes, the more their academic performance is affected adversely. Thus the propensity of such students to excel academically is minimal as compared with students who attend classes punctually and regularly.

Recommendations

a) It is recommended that punctuality should be entrenched in the mindset of students. They will be expected to be in class ready for the lectures to start and to stay until classes are dismissed by the lecturers.

b) It is also recommended that lectures commence as scheduled always. In the course of this study it was observed that lecturers do not come to classes early with the result that at many occasions that they were early in classes, some students did not expect and were not also in classes as early.

c) Lecturers will be doing a great service to society if they take students as their children and nurture them properly as leaders of tomorrow. This could be achieved when the classroom is turned to a pleasurable exercise that the students will be looking forward to every day.

d) It is the view of this study that punctuality and attendance to classes should be rewarded or punished appropriately as well as legislated on adequately for improved academic performance of students.

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