

Assessment of Students Poor Performance in English and Literary Studies in Niger Delta University

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Abstract

This study investigated the poor performance of students in English Language and Literary Studies in Niger Delta University. This study is geared towards the improvement of student's performance in English and Literary Studies in Niger Delta University. The researchers employed descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 200 composed 100 female students and 100 male students stratified random sampling was used to get the sample size in the Niger Delta University. The Larkert scale was of SA, A, D. SD. The research instrument constructed, called English Language and Literary Studies Students Assessment Scale (ELLSAS). The validity of the scale was confirmed by experts. The reliability was determined using crombark Alpha at 0.80 coefficient at 0.05 level of significance. Pearson Product moment correlation and T-test was used to analysis the data collected. 3 hypotheses were raised and tested, Hypothesis 1 with T-test, Hypothesis 2&3 with Pearson product Moment Co-efficient. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers came up with the following recommendations. The state government should provide and improve upon infrastructures like Hostel Accommodation, Transportation and Lecturers offices. Lecturers should engage students in frequent reading and writing. Parents should encourage their wards to read at home and provide comfortable libraries at home, school libraries should encourage readership promotion programmes and lastly, school libraries should stock the libraries with relevant books.

Keywords:

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Background to the Study

The poor performance of students in English language in Niger Delta University is scary and generally in Nigerian secondary schools and universities. English language is a language of communication in Nigerian society. It is a medium of instruction, as a lingua Franca, useful in all facets of lives in Nigeria. English as a second language is useful between the encoder and decoders. It is a language meant for a medium of communication by instructors (teachers) in the school. English is a compulsory subject to be taken to qualify students to enter the universities and to pass West African senior school certificate (WASSCE) and other similar examinations to qualify for higher institutions of learning, (Oribabor 2014).

English is our major instrument of communication in various ministries, parastatals, universities, business centre, etc. Without English language, it would have been difficult for an average Nigerian to exist and interact with the rest and outside world. The scope of the topic is a wider one but restricted to Niger Delta University students. Since examination is a yardstick or measure used in determining the level of students' performance, the researcher is using to examine factors that determine English language in Niger Delta University.

Oribabor (2014) looked at some of the factors as sociological, psychological, environment, political, psycho-social influence of peer group in schools. The psycho-motor domain of students to the study of English language needs to be properly examined. The role of stakeholders of education in our society, such as lecturers, parents, government policies on education, non-governmental policies on education, non-governmental organization and other bodies affiliated with the university. The sociological aspect of the factors revealed the truth nowadays that there is no ready culture in our society among our youths. The value of people towards reading is negative in the sense that many youths believe that spending many years in the universities, primary and secondary school are waste of time. Some believe that at the end of the day, graduate may find himself in the unemployment market, looking for white collar jobs and if he could not get any, may result into armed robbery. Some even think that it is better to study courses that will make one to be on your own at the end of the day.

Many believe that the standard of education in Nigeria has fallen: parents chant it, government officials and school authorities, (Zalakoro 2013). Our governments worry about it and teachers concede it. But just ask a concerned parents how he knows that the standard of education has fallen, he would invariably reply "my child can neither write nor speak in simple correct English" in essence, it shows that speaking and writing of English language correctly or fluently is the only yardstick. To develop this needed competence and to ensure a high level of performance, one has to internalize the structure of the English language to the point of automacy. There seems to be general agreement among the public and a large number of educationists that students' performance in English language is not encouraging. Ituen (2009) opines that one of the indispensable tools a learner needs is a rich stock of words and their appropriate application without

errors. The general consensus has been that there is no significant improvement in the competence and performance ability of students even at the university level. Even with credit pass in English language, in the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE), students performance in written text at the university level is generally far below expectation. Youths even think that English language is not necessary in the daily routine since they are able to communicate in Pidgin English. It is the value for money that is highly essential to them. Their attitude to reading their recommended text is negative.

Okecha (2013) states that a nation that does not imbibe a good reading attitude is a dead nation. It has been observed that the ability to read helps in full participation in national affairs. It is also necessary for job efficiency and professional growth. Tertiary institutions hold the key to production of manpower for the workforce. The answer to quality workforce is the quest for economic development is reiteration of a reading culture. Reading is the ability to sit down and read for hours without promoting. It requires a lot to do with discipline. Accordingly, reading culture holds the key to the development of an individual. Reading is defined as the art of perusing written or printed matter, the practice is occupying oneself in a way. It can also be defined as the extent to which one reads or has read literary material. It is also the art of uttering aloud the words of written or printed matter.

Students are given so many materials to read in a semester. The ability to have interest in reading literary works; novels, autobiographies, biography, magazines, newspapers, plays and poetry. Novels are classified under narrative prose. Prose is the form of writing that does not adhere to any formal structures. Length is used to categorize works of prose fiction. Aminisaga is a short story of exactly 50 words; flash fiction refers to a piece of prose under a thousand words. A short story is prose between 100 and 20,000 words (but typically more than 5000 words), which may or may not have a narrative arc. If the students are given too many novels to read and the efforts to get these reading materials in the libraries within the university environment, the students' performance at the end of every semester will be poor. Lack of reading materials, inadequate funding of schools, conducive environment, parents not helping their children, lack of interest on the part of students, effect on broken homes, student's guides and counselors, lecturer's attitude etc. are many factors affecting student's poor performance in English language.

Statement of the Problem

Poor performance of students in English language is not peculiar to Niger Delta University, for it is almost a global issue and some other universities even advanced countries using English as a second or foreign language of instruction are facing it. There seems to be a general agreement among the public and the large number of educationalist that students' performance in English language is not encouraging. Moreover, this led to comments made by the public that the poor performance of students in English language is at its peak. And if educational problems in Nigeria are not redressed, we are all in trouble. The general consensus has been that there is no significant improvement in the

competence ability of students even at the university level. Based on the obvious practical utility of the English language in all aspects of life in Nigeria, students make a lot of errors in their written and spoken works. Many students are not interested in reading recommended texts for academic performances. They no longer read novels, biographies or drama books and there is no way, they can perform successfully without reading. Since the yardstick for measuring the fallen standard of education is writing and speaking English language correctly, correctly of fluency. To develop this need competence and to ensure a high level of performance, one has to internalize the structure of the language to the point of automacy.

Aims & Objective of the Study

The researchers' aim of this study is to investigate the performance of student in English and Literary Studies in Niger Delta University. To be specific, this study seeks to

1. Determine the difference in performance of male and female students in Niger Delta University
2. Determine the relationship between the class size and performance of students
3. To determine the relationship between available infrastructure and students performance in English Language and Literary Studies in Niger Delta University.

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in performance of male and female students in English and Literary Studies in Niger Delta University.
2. There is no significant relationship between the class size and performance of students in English and Literary Studies in Niger Delta University.
3. There is no significant relationship between available infrastructure (Hostel Accommodation) and students performance in English and Literary Studies in Niger Delta University

Methodology

The design for the study was descriptive survey and the sampling technique used was stratified sampling technique. The population of the study consist of 200 student of male and female students of equal number (4 points) Lawkert scale was used to conduct the assessment scale of SA strongly agree (A) Agree (D) Disagree (SD) strongly Disagree. The Instrument used in collecting Data was English and Literary Studies Students Assessment Scale. (ELLSAS). The validity of the scale was confirmed by experts. The reliability was determined using Cromback Alpha at 0.80 Co-efficient at 0.05 level of significance. Pearson Product moment correlation and T-test was used for analysis of the data collected.

Data Interpretation and Result

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in poor performance of male and female students in English and Literary Studies in Niger Delta University.

Table one: T-test Analysis of performance of male and female students in English and Literary Students in Niger Delta University.

| Variables | N | X | SD | DF | T-CAL | Et | Table | Decision |
|-----------------|-----|-------|--------|-----|-------|------|-------|--------------------------|
| Female Students | 100 | 51.14 | 11.130 | | | | | |
| Male Students | 100 | 52.20 | 12.291 | 280 | 1.60 | 2.46 | N | Null Hypothesis retained |

Table one showed that the calculated T-test value of 1.60 is less than the T-test table value of 2.46 which indicates that there is no significant difference between the poor performance of female and male students in English and Literary Students in Niger Delta University.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between the poor performance of students in English and Literary Studies in the different years and the class size

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| Class Size 200 | 1.00 | | | |
| Year I | -.490* | 1.00 | | |
| Year II | -.570* | -.095 | 1.000 | |
| Year III | -.540* | .102 | .073 | 1.000 |

The table result showed that the different result of students in year 1r = -.49, $P < .05$, Year 2r = -.570, $P < 0.5$ and year 3r = -.540, thus correlated negatively with the class size is not the cause of poor performance of students.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between available infrastructure like transportation, lecturer's offices, hostel accommodation and student's overall performance in year 1, 2 & 3.

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|------|------|-------|---|
| Overall student performance in Year 1, 2 & 3 of 2016 /17 academic year. | 1.00 | | | |
| Hostel Accommodation | 1.21 | 1.00 | | |
| Transportation | 1.31 | 1.03 | 1.000 | |
| Lecturers offices | 1.51 | 1.04 | 1.42 | |

The result of the correlational matrix for Hypothesis 3 showed the independent variable.

Hostel Accommodation $r = 1.21$

$P > .05$: Transportation $r = 1.21$

$P > .05$: Lecturers office $r = 1.31$

$P > .05$: All correlated positively with the dependent variable.

Students performance in years 1, 2 & 3 of 2016 /17 academic sessions in Niger Delta University.

Discussion and Findings

In view of the findings of this study, the researchers observed the results of hypothesis 1 showed that there was no significant difference in the poor performance of male and female students in English and Literary Students in Niger Delta University invariable the T-test result showed that gender did not come to play in their performance both gender need to work hard to meet up to the expectations in their performance. Micheal (2014) acknowledges the importance of reading, as 81.9% of students within the two semester while those that read, do this for the purpose of passing examination. The study confirmed that reading habit has influence on academic performance.

Hypothesis 2 which, there is no significant relationship between the poor performance of students in the different years and the class size of 200 students.

The correlation matrix result showed that there was no significant relationship since it was Negative between the poor performance of students with the class size of 200 students as a faculty course in year I, Year 2 and Year 3. The indication that the performance of students needs to be improved as their performance over the years seems to be constant.

The result of Hypothesis 3, shows there is no significant relationship between the dependent variable poor performance of students in English and Literary Students and infrastructural amenities the independent variable of hostel accommodation, transportation, lecturers offices. The result showed that there is a positive correlation between the poor performance of students and the infrastructural amenities like hostel accommodation, transport and teachers offices in Niger Delta University. This implies that poor study environment influenced the performance of students in English Language and Literary Studies in Niger Delta University. Mosha (2014) agrees that poor conducive infrastructural amenities in an environment of learning results to poor academic performance.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations based on the findings of the study

1. The state government should provide and improve upon the existing hostel accommodation, transportation by providing Buses for both students and lecturers. Also more staff offices should be built to accommodate staff.
2. Lecturers should engage students in frequents reading and writing activities.
3. Parents should encourage their children to read from an early age. They should also strive to have a library at home as well as a favorable reading environment at home.
4. School libraries should organize readership promotion programmes from time to time and prizes and awards to students who are proficient in reading and writing.
5. The school library should be stocked with enough necessary reading materials to motivate the interest of the students. Variety of reading materials like story books, novels, newspapers and magazines should be provided for the student's leisure time.

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