

POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: CAUSES AND REMEDIES

¹ALOKAN, Funmilola Bosede and ²ADEWUMI, Damilola Mercy

^{1&2}Department of Guidance and Counselling

Faculty of Education, Ekiti state University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

Abstract

Education is a right of every child, whether traditional or modern, it has always been a major concern of man. Education is considered the most significant factor in producing human resource development in terms of social, cultural, technological, economic and overall national perspectives. The problem of low academic performance of students in examinations is one of the most challenging problems that face students, as well as parents and teachers. Poor academic performance is not only frustrating to the students and the stakeholders, its effects are equally crucial in the society; in terms of lack of manpower in all fields of the economy. It is on these premises that this paper takes a look at the meaning of poor academic performance, causes of poor academic performance and ways of improving academic performance. It was recommended among others, that teachers should make use of recent and relevant teaching materials, to ensure better understanding and performance of students. It was also recommended that there should be effective supervision of teaching and learning process in the classroom.

Keywords: Education, academic, performance, learners, teachers

Introduction

Education is the acquisition of knowledge and skills and attitude. It can be defined as the process by which individuals acquire skills, attitude and competence. Education is a right of every child, whether traditional or modern, it has always been a major concern of man. Education is considered the most significant factor in producing human resource developments in terms of social, cultural, technological, economic and overall national perspectives (Sumaila, Al-Muktadir & Rejvi-Ahmed, 2023).

Most individuals will reflect on their time spent in college as the life-changing period of their lives. When in college, students require attention in terms of academic and social well-being

(Stoddard, 2023). Academic performance of students has been the subject of intensive research over the years. It has become an issue in education. The problem of low academic performance of students in examinations is one of the most challenging problems that face students as well as teachers. Among the numerous variables researched, demographic status, intelligence, behavioural characteristics and psychological factors, namely: attitudes, self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-concept, have been used to determine academic performance (Al-Zoubi & Bani-Younes, 2015). Beside differences in ability, students have specific learning styles that may influence their academic performance. Sternberg (1997) proposed that learning styles are in part socialized,

suggesting that they can, to some extent, be modified. Thus, being aware of learning styles and their roles in academic performance is of a great importance for educational psychologists, teachers and researchers.

Causes of Poor Academic Performance

Aremu (2003) identified poor academic performance as a performance that is adjudged by the examiner and some significant others as falling below an expected standard. He also stressed that poor academic performance is not only frustrating to the students and the parents, its effects are equally crucial in the society; in terms of lack of manpower in all fields of the economy. There are many reasons for poor academic performance.

1. Lack of a Clear Plan:

Success does not happen suddenly or by chance. Before starting any work, there should be developed plans. The basic principle of any plan is that it should be adjustable and elastic in any stage of its implementation. Ideas will remain ideas, if the plan does not exist.

2. Medical and Psychological Reasons:

There are many causes related to medical and psychological reasons.

- a. Major depression disorder – Depression is common before examination period. Depression can cause inability and weakness in concentration of the patient. Depression can lead to poor academic performance.

- b. Generalized anxiety disorder – This can cause a situation of forgetting, it can also cause weakness in concentration.
- c. Examination phobia – It is a case of severe fear of the examination and the expectation of failure, which weakens the educational performance of the student. It is accompanied with less attention and not being fully prepared for the examination.
- d. Obsessive compulsive disorder: It is the frequent predominant ideas in mind of the students that prevent them from thinking about anything else.
- e. Attention disorder: It is the lack of ability to focus attention on one thing at a certain time.
- f. Learning disability (Slow learning): It is a functional deficit in the brain leading to a lack of capacity to acquire new knowledge, as cases in low IQ or difficulty in reading (Dyslexia) or difficulty in writing (Dysgraphia) or difficulty in Mathematics (Dyscalculia).

3. Parental and Educational Reasons:

The excess pressure on the students to get high marks in examinations may create a feeling of fear if they are unable to get high marks as required by parents, and the frequently leads to poor academic performance. Moreover, the unstable family situations make

students live in a state of tension, confusion and lack of concentration during the examination which will reflect negatively on academic performance. According to Ige and Ogunleye (2016) study, it was found that parents' factors contribute to low academic performance of students.

4. Social Environment:

The social environment includes family, peers, and involvement in clubs and groups. Sociological factors originate from circumstances surrounding a student's school or home. These social elements have much impact on academic performance. They include communication, family stress and status, self-esteem and social support.

5. Lack of Motivation:

Although some people may fail at some point in their lives, they have to consider failure as a temporary setback to success and they have to learn how to deal with it. A very important result of Maric and Sakac (2014) study, is that social motivational factors have shown themselves to be more frequent among students. This study showed that internal motivational factors are more desirable for students' academic success. The practical implication of this study was to improve the intrinsic motivation and internal motivational factors

among students because they present significant contributing factors to academic success.

Improving Academic Performance

Efforts to help students deal with specific academic weakness can involve improvement in teacher practices, for example, offer of remedial classes either during the term (in the evenings or weekends) or vacations. Another approach is to provide a two-week period, when no classes are held but teachers are available to help students address their weaknesses. Extra inputs can also be provided, such as, tutorial classes where additional problems are solved and students interact with each other; student and Faculty collaborations on projects where teachers are available to students formally and informally, and focus attention on weak members of the group. Teachers can explain the importance of a topic being taught and its relevance to the 'real world'. Teachers can also move around the classroom and interact with students while they solve problems or read texts, or even while just giving lessons. They can use media beyond 'chalk and board'; classrooms can be equipped with charts, models, projectors and videos to make instruction more visual and tactile. Teachers can give feedback to students on their performance and how to improve it. They can be open to questions and to feedback from students about the teaching contents and style. They can also be available for formal and informal contact after class.

Another way to improve academic performance is through motivation. A highly motivated person puts in the maximum efforts in his or her job. According to Kafui (2005), lack of motivation and professional commitment produce poor attendance and unprofessional attitudes toward students, which in turn affect the performance of students academically. Hall (1989) noted that there is a need to motivate students, so as to arouse and sustain their interest in learning. One review of literature highlighted the importance of students' study habits and attitudes in their academic performance. According to Mendezabal (2013), many students fail, not because they lack ability, but because they do not have adequate study skills. Nagaraju (2004) found that students do not devote sufficient time to their studies and seldom have proper study habits. Students having good study habits, will attain good academic success.

Kafui (2005) was of the view that effective supervision of instruction can improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. Etsey, Amedahe and Edjah (2004) in a study of 60 schools, 29 schools from peri-urban and 31 schools from rural areas in Ghana, found that academic performance was better in private schools than public schools because of more effective supervision of work. In addition, the role and influence of the parents in the affairs of education of their children are extremely important. Parents are one of the stakeholders in education. Unusual situations like

extended families, single parenthood, learners living with step-parents or no parents are common. These social situations prevailing in the community may not allow parents to give enough attention and care that are needed in the education of learners. These situations eventually lead learners to activities that negatively affect their education. Lack of effective parental involvement or no involvement in the education of learners are evident in the performance and behaviour of most of the learners in schools.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. Adequate care should be given by parents; and school needs should be provided by parents of the students to ensure effective learning and better performance of the students.
2. Parents should give more attention and proper monitoring to their children education.
3. Parents should ensure that social factors do not have much impact on students' study life.
4. Teachers should, by all means, make use of recent and relevant teaching materials, such as textbooks, charts and so on, in the teaching, learning process; to ensure better understanding and performance of students.
6. Teachers personalities should be corporate and simple to attract the

attention of the students, so as to contribute positively and enable students to have sense of belonging to academic.

7. Teachers should develop positive attitude towards the students under their control to ensure effective learning and better performance of their students.
8. Students should devote more time to their studies and have good study habits.
9. There should be effective supervision of teaching and learning process in the classroom.

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