

Teaching Effectiveness and Students' Performance in Conventional Schools and Coaching Centres in Lagos State.

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Abstract

There has been a proliferation of coaching centres in Lagos State. These run side-by-side conventional schools offering general education. Stakeholders in the education industry have raised questions on the relevance of these coaching centres particularly in terms of students' academic performance, teaching effectiveness, leadership and supervisory activities of super-ordinates and the availability and utilization of basic infrastructure and teaching/learning resources. This study therefore sought to compare conventional schools with coaching centres on each of these four variables. It was considered rather ironic that coaching centres, which were rated inferior to conventional schools in terms of teaching effectiveness and leadership and supervisory activities would be adjudged by same respondents as superior in enhancing better academic performance of students. The implications of these for the continued existence of these centres were explored.

Background to the Study

The comparison and analysis of teacher effectiveness and students performance in conventional schools and coaching centres is an attempt to probe the issues of the standard of education in Nigeria. This remains a very crucial factor given the outcry against low standard of education, examination malpractices, and the inability of the graduates of the nation's educational institutions to match the efficient effective requirement for national development of the twenty-first century.

If education is the indispensable process used to seek the solution to human needs; it would therefore imply that any educational system that achieves this in the lives of the citizenry is of a high standard. Conversely, any educational system that cannot achieve individual self-fulfilment, guarantee the success of socio-economic exigencies, national development and consolidation, or global relations for improved standard of living is of a low standard. While there may be varied criteria to evaluate the standard of education the following are suggested here:

- Concept of national development to mean an industrialized nation.
- An improved standard of living
- Schools have been a major agency for transmitting the knowledge, traditions and values of society.
- Schools have aimed to provide the society with the requisite skills for its continued economic existence, or the religious and social understanding needed for its stability as measures of educational standard. To this Silver (1994) opined that schooling has, broadly speaking, been interpreted as providing a basic ('elementary' or 'primary') education, a more advanced ('secondary') education, and a higher (post-secondary', 'college', 'seminary', university') education intended to provide intellectual, political and social leadership.

On standard, schools have defined their aims and objectives in terms of human potential or economic growth, social status or financial success, service to God or the social elite, liberal learning or athletic prowess, measurable knowledge or applied morality (Silver, 1994). Schools' crops of teachers have been recruited on different principles, and their curricula have had different shapes and contents.

For a high standard of education schools need a larger share of the nation's best human resources, more money to buy essential physical facilities and equipment, more and better teaching materials, and, in some instances, food for hungry pupils to put them in a condition to learn. Above all, for high standard of education to be a reality, educational systems would need "ideas and courage, determination, and a new will for self-appraisal, reinforced by a will for adventure and change" (Coombs, 1985).

But a high standard of education, the outcome of school system would serve the nations' economic needs by providing suitably qualified manpower, serve the interests of a dominant political ideology as well as sustain opportunities for independent ideas and action. Silver (1994: 2) on school standard, efficiency and effectiveness writes: Schools may be poor or efficient or ineffective, but they do not normally aim to be so. They may have limited goals, or for various reasons they may fall short of the explicit or implicit goals they set for themselves or have set for them. A 'good' school has always been one, which by some publicly available standard has consistently achieved known or assumed goals. That standard may have to do with the attitude or behaviour of its students, the rules by which the school conducts its affairs, the performance of its students in tests or examinations, on the playing field or the battlefield. It may be associated with neatness and deference, creativity and imagination, respect for tradition or commitment to change. A good school has been judged by the employability of its products, or by measures, which have enabled schools to attract students or earn payment by revealed results. In rapidly changing societies there may be deeply

controversial and conflicting views of what constitutes the purpose of schooling, and what the characteristics of a good school are therefore. Social change brings a search for redefinition, for improvement, for 'better' schools.

The reality of standard of education, teacher effectiveness and students' performance would put into consideration such characteristics as school size, attendance rates, the personnel/student ratio, teachers' qualification and training and a keen observer would admit that Nigeria educational system is faced with problems on the above characteristics. Empirical researches have demonstrated that the concept of teaching effectiveness is difficult to define given its multidimensional nature and the fact that the concept is not universal but dependent on a number of factors (Fabiya, 1999). No objective criteria constitutes teacher effectiveness because a teacher may be effective with one group of children and ineffective with another since effectiveness can be modified by the physical, social and cultural environment in which the teacher operates (Cope, 1971). Therefore, the characteristics of effective and ineffective teachers have been identified with high school examination results for three years, teacher's rating, pupils' rating of teachers attitude towards teaching and learning aptitude put together, academic qualifications, ratings by principals, and the scores of teachers on rating scale to measure teachers' sensitivity by an observer in areas such as knowledge of the subject, communicability, appearance, responsibility, resourcefulness, judgment and reasoning, helpfulness and the ability to organise (Grewal, 1976; Singh, 1976; Mahashawari, 1976).

The issue of the proliferation of coaching centres for general education in Nigeria, seems to point to the inefficient and ineffectiveness of the conventional school system to provide high standard of education. This is evident in a high percentage of students who enrol and sit for the nation's examinations at the end of general education in school with astonishing high rate of failure. In another dimension, graduates of the nation's general education remain incapable of useful employment or fit for intellectual pursuit in higher education level as entry selection examinations indicate.

Statement of the Problem

The upsurge in the number of coaching centres in recent times with parallel operations with conventional schools to improve students' performance in general education examinations has become a major concern in Nigerian educational system. Some observers have argued that the proliferation of coaching centres is a clear indicator of the failure of the conventional schools to achieve educational goals and values for the nation. Some observers have argued that coaching centres exist to achieve what is absent in the conventional schools – better attention, smaller class size, better monitoring, specific exams, fewer subjects, intensive (more hours), value for money, discipline of students and teachers, 'no work, no pay, not government work', better appreciated and motivated teachers. However, those against coaching

centres argue that they are exploitative given the fact that students' performance is still low even after having attended the centres for general education examinations.

It is our opinion that coaching centres are not necessary for a better standard of education because it is teachers from conventional schools that run coaching centres; and at times coaching centres make use of non-professional teachers. Before anyone could justify the existence of coaching centres let us reflect on these salient questions: where were the teachers in coaching centres trained? Which syllabuses do they use for their claim to improved students' performance? Is education just for making ends meet economically? Are coaching centres better than the conventional schools in terms of students' perceived academic achievement, social skills acquisition and effective participation in teaching – learning process, leadership and supervisory activities, availability and utilization of basic infrastructure and in terms of teaching effectiveness as measured by instructional procedures, teacher competence and academic and professional qualifications?

This investigation assesses private coaching schools in the educational sector to determine their impact on the above variables. The purpose is to make a distinction between coaching and conventional schools in order to establish their differences and similarities.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis tested was that conventional schools are significantly different from coaching centres in some measures of teaching effectiveness and academic performance of students.

Method

Design

The research design is ex-post facto. Ex-post factor research designs are so called because they are usually carried out after the event or phenomenon of interest has occurred and attempts to answer such questions as what went with what, under what condition and in what sequence and pattern of occurrence? The phenomena of interest in this study are students' perceived academic performance, teaching effectiveness, leadership and supervisory activities, availability and utilization of basic infrastructures and learning/teaching materials (dependent variables) and type of school – conventional or coaching centre (independent variable).

Area of study

The study was carried out in all the 20 local education districts (LED) of Lagos State. One conventional school and one coaching centre were randomly selected from each local education district. In all, there were 20 conventional and 20 coaching centres involved in the study.

Sample and sampling technique

The subjects of the study consisted of two sub-samples – students and teachers. The student sample was made up of 240 students of equal gender composition, half of whom were attending conventional schools while the remainder were attending coaching centres. The mean age of the students was 17.8 years. The teachers who participated in the study were 160. They were drawn from conventional and coaching centres on a one-to-one ratio, using stratified random sampling technique to ensure equal gender composition and that four teachers were randomly drawn from each of the 20 conventional and 20 coaching centres. The mean age of the teachers was 34.2 years. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select the 240 students. The basis for stratification was grade level, gender and school type. In each of the schools and centres, 3 male and 3 female students were randomly selected such that at least one male and one female student were chosen from each of SS 1 to SS 3.

Instrumentation

The instrument used to generate the relevant data was a 48 item, 4-option Likert-scale type of instrument designated School Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ). It consisted of five sections. The first section sought the demographic data of the students while the second section consisted of ten items designed to elicit responses on students' perceived academic achievement, social skills acquisition and effective participation in the teaching-learning process. Section C was made up of nine items, which measured the variable of teaching effectiveness as measured by instructional procedures, teacher competence and academic and professional qualifications. Section D contained eight items and assessed leadership and supervisory activities while the last section was to assess availability and utilization of basic infrastructure and instructional materials. In all, there were equal positive and negative statements. Respondents were required to rate conventional and coaching centres on four-Point Likert-type response categories of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. For positive items the response categories were scored 4 for strongly agree, 3 for agree, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree while negative items were reverse scored. A linear transformation of the scores to percentages was done before the data were processed.

A bank of indicators of teaching effectiveness (presage- process- context – product variables) and quality education development by Heneveld and Craig (1996), Chacko (1980), Bajah (1998), and Awomolo (1983) was used to generate the questionnaire items. Face validity was ensured through expert opinion while test retest reliability after a four-week period yielded a coefficient of 0.72.

Procedure for data collection

The relevant data were personally collected by the two investigators assisted by graduate students who were full-time teachers in Lagos state and were undergoing a programme of study leading to the award of the Post-Graduate Diploma in Education of the University of Lagos. The research assistants liaised with their respective LED offices to obtain a comprehensive register of approved coaching centres and public secondary schools (excluding unity schools and model colleges) in each LED. It was from these registers that one public secondary school and one coaching centre were randomly selected from each LED. Once a school or centre was selected, the researchers visited it on an agreed date and time and administered the instrument personally to a random selection of six students and four teachers. These yielded a 100 percent questionnaire return rate. In the conventional schools, the questionnaire were administered during the 'break period' while in coaching centres they were administered immediately after the last lecture period of the day. This was necessary to maximize subjects' cooperation and minimize the disruption of the school or centre programme.

Method for Data Analysis

The data collected were first transformed to percentage to ensure comparability and then analysed using paired sample t-test statistical procedure. All tests of significance were performed at the 95 percent confidence interval.

Results

The hypothesis tested was that conventional schools and coaching centres do not significantly differ in each of their perceived teaching effectiveness, availability and utilization of basic infrastructure and learning materials, leadership and supervisory activities and their students' perceived academic performance. The results of data analysis utilizing paired sample t-test are shown in table 1.

Results presented in Table 1 indicate that on perceived academic performance of students in conventional and coaching centres, the respondents rated the coaching centres much higher than the conventional schools, with respective mean values of 62.15 (sd = 15.83) for coaching centres and 58.30 (sd = 18.19) for conventional schools. On the two variables of perceived teaching effectiveness and leadership and supervisory activities, conventional schools were consistently rated higher with paired mean differences of 3.74 on teaching effectiveness and 10.87 on leadership and supervisory activities.

Table 1: Differences in perceived teacher effectiveness, leadership and supervisory activities, availability and utilization of basic infrastructure and students' academic Performance between conventional and coaching centres.

	Variable Pair	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error mean	Paired sampler	Paired Differences Mean	t	Sig.
Pair 1	Perceived academic Performance (coaching)	62.15	15.83	0.79	-0.01	3.85	3.21	0.001
	Perceived academic Performance (conventional)	58.30	18.19	0.91				
Pair 2	Perceived teacher Effectiveness (coaching)	59.00	15.02	0.75	-0.55	3.74	3.37	0.001
	Perceived teacher Effectiveness (conventional)	62.75	15.53	0.78				
Pair 3	Leadership/supervisory activities (coaching)	53.51	18.05	0.90	-0.11	10.87	8.74	0.001
	Leadership/supervisory acts. (Conventional)	64.38	15.27	0.76				
Pair 4	Availability and utilization of amenities (coaching)	62.26	16.41	0.82	-0.12	0.51	0.45	0.65
	Availability and utilization of amenities (conventional)	62.77	14.02	0.70				

However, on availability and utilization of basic infrastructure and teaching/learning materials, conventional schools were rated at par with coaching centres, with a negligible mean difference of 0.51 between the two ratings.

Table 1 also revealed that three of the four-paired samples tests were statistically significant at the 0.05 alpha levels. The pairs on which significant differences were obtained were perceived academic achievement of students ($t = 3.21$, $df = 399$, $P < 0.05$) where coaching centres were rated higher and

leadership and supervisory activities ($t = 3.21$, $df = 399$, $P < 0.05$) where conventional schools were rated higher. The calculated t-value of 0.45 obtained in respect of availability and utilization of basic infrastructure and teaching resources was less than the theoretical t-value of 1.96 at the 0.05 level of significance.

It is important to note the paired samples correlations shown in Table 1. It was evident that all four computed correlations were negative and low indicating an inverse relationship between the ratings of conventional and coaching centres. Respondents who rated coaching centres high rated the conventional schools low and vice versa.

Results in Table 1 therefore suggest that coaching centres were adjudged to achieve better academic performance of their students than conventional schools. However, on teaching effectiveness and leadership and supervisory activities, the conventional schools were perceived to be better. The availability and utilization of basic infrastructure and teaching resources in conventional and coaching centres seemed to receive equal ratings.

Discussion

The results of this study have shown that respondents rated conventional schools and coaching centres equally on availability of basic infrastructure and teaching resources. However, on teaching effectiveness and supervisory and leadership activities, conventional schools were rated higher. Given this scenario it would be expected that conventional schools will also be rated higher than coaching centres on students perceived academic achievement, but the reverse was the case. Several studies have demonstrated the positive relationship between teaching effectiveness, leadership and supervisory activities and scholastic achievement of students (Fabiya, 1999; Heneveld and Craig, 1996). Schools where the super-ordinates' leadership and supervisory behaviours are congenial, where teachers possess the relevant academic and professional qualifications garnished with relevant cognate experience and where teachers marshal their instructional procedures efficiently and effectively have been shown to achieve high student performance in academic tasks (Chako, 1980). It is therefore rather paradoxical and defies any logic that coaching centres that have been adjudged to be inferior to conventional schools in terms of these two important variables would be perceived as enhancing better student academic achievement. Either of two explanations is plausible for the absurdity. First, the contradiction may be the direct result of the age-long accusation that coaching centres do not encourage true learning in their students but emphasise the achievement of high grades at public examinations through various educational malpractices, including but not limited to impersonation and cheating. Secondly, the perceived high academic achievement in coaching centres may just be a mirage and illusionary, more so when most students enrol in both conventional and coaching centres concurrently.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Findings of this study have demonstrated that despite the higher rating of conventional schools in terms of teaching effectiveness and leadership and supervisory activities of super-ordinate, respondents still perceived coaching centres as centres of excellence. Since this perception defies simple logic and negates the consistent empirical findings of the positive relationship between teaching effectiveness, supervisory and leadership activities and student outcomes, it becomes imperative that further studies be conducted to unravel the mechanisms by which coaching centres attain their feat. The policy implications of this are that procedures need be put in place at all tiers of government for effective monitoring particularly so as to determine what works in these centres. If it is established that the perceived academic excellence in these centres is 'wind pollinated' then there is the need to streamline the activities of the centres in order to mitigate their negative consequences and unintended outcomes.

In the course of this investigation, it was discovered that a large proportion of teachers in the coaching centre were full-time employees of the conventional schools, particularly public schools. A majority of the students were also enrolled in both systems. On the part of teachers, this raises a moral ethical question – is it right for a teacher to charge extra fees for coaching his/her student? To transfer assignments and revision exercises to coaching centres and by implication an unjust act against students who do not attend such centres? Can a teacher efficiently and effectively discharge his employment obligations working for both systems? What are the effects of moonlighting on the teachers' mental and physical health and on their loyalty? On the part of students, what are the effects of extra coaching on mental health, on leisure, on readiness to learn and so on. Answers to these questions do not come easily.

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