

PERCEIVED IMPACT OF SOCIAL VICES ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN NIGERIAN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

By

OSEYA THERESA OLA (MRS).

Department of Home Economics, School of Vocational Education,
Kogi State College of Education (Technical) Kabba.

Email: oseyatheresa62@gmail.com

Tell: +2348033268456, +2347089326610

and

UGOCHUKWU DAVID EWELE

Department of Home Economics, School of Vocational Education,
Kogi State College of Education(Technical) Kabba

Email: davidewe2016@gmail.com

Tell: +2348163529228, +2349053783362

Abstract

This paper investigated the impact of Social Vices on the Academic Performance of students in Nigerian Senior Secondary Schools. The first step is to introduce the reader to the troubling circumstances in senior secondary schools caused by social vices. The meaning of academic performance and social vices are examined. The paper identified the various forms of social vices prevalent in Nigerian senior secondary schools as evident in several other research works as they affect the accomplishment of the objectives of senior secondary education programs. Causes and effects of social vices on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Nigeria were equally discussed. A blue print explaining the interaction of social vices on the campuses of Nigerian senior secondary schools were illustrated. Finally, conclusions and recommendations were made as regards to tackling social vices in the Nigerian Senior Secondary school system.

Keywords: Social Vices, Peer Group, Negligence, Truancy, Drug Abuse, Cultism, Students Academic Performance, Corruption, Nigeria, Examination Malpractice.

Introduction

Knowledge which is an important commodity to any society is also known as education which is the cornerstone for development of a nation. Development helps to bring about meaningful transformation in the lives of the people in such a way that there is no wide gap between one section of the society and another.

Development is in line with growth and progressive change and these changes can be physical, mental or emotional (Eluekwute, Danburam, Zakariah and James 2021). In our society today, the provision of education is within institutions in primary, secondary schools and tertiary levels.

Some years ago(over sixty eight years), the Cambridge Conference on Africa Education defines education as the united concern of a people for the right upbringing of its children and improvement of its national life. Femi (2013) sees education as the transmission of life by the living to the living.

Elujekwute (2019) described social vices as an act of indiscipline and they are those acts and conditions that violate the societal norms and values. They are habits or behaviors of immoral activities such as cultism, robbery, ritual killing, kidnapping, smoking and drug peddling and among others. They are also seen as acts of indiscipline which interfere with the

teaching and learning process, manifesting itself in various ways including alcoholic and substance abuse, vandalism, bullying, truancy, inability or unwillingness to do home works. The causes of indiscipline in senior secondary schools in Nigeria include; hash schools rules, authoritarian methods, bad staff behaviors, poor communication results, lack of adequate schools facilities, influence from home and society.

Consequently, according to Ayobami (2011), who rightly observed that the solid moral and intellectual terrain expected to be found in secondary schools has suddenly become slippery veering towards an unprecedented magnitude of immorality. Over the past decades, educational administrators in secondary schools have mapped out strategies to combat social vices bedeviling our centers of learning. Some of such measures have resulted to increased punishment of students and sanctioning of erring staff that either aid and abet or condone social vices. This has become a nagging issue with regards to students' academic performance in secondary schools.

In Nigeria, negative modernization, devastating acculturation of other people's culture, deliberate poor governance, legendary and colossal corruption in all aspects of the nation's life exacerbated by the destructive impact of the mass media has eroded the cultural values and acceptable behavior pattern of our parents of the past age. Ebenwa-Okoh, Akpochafo and Onoyase (2013) notes that morality to a large extent across the society has been thrown to the trash can. Ungodly pursuit of mundane assets driven by a materialistic culture has relegated human life to the background. Peaceful and successful life is gradually eluding the inhabitants of our society. The social system of things has been unbearably charged with a bestial lust for money where the activities of social miscreants have suffocated almost every facet of human endeavor. Insurgence and militancy, agitation, unmitigated ethnic violence, religious bigotry, judicial ineptitude, financial impunity and a host of other indescribable antisocial behavioral dispositions are gradually becoming the acceptable order of the day. This anomaly has gradually found its way firmly entrenched in secondary schools in Nigeria. These anti-social behaviors have been swapped with the foundation objectives of the Nigerian senior secondary schools which are character and intellectual upbringing of learners.

Igwe and Nath (2005) reports that various form of social vices by students have negatively influenced the entire educational system. Most of institutional certificates and transcript records have been discredited for reasons traceable to academic and moral deficiencies. Okwu (2013) affirms that much damage has been done to the fabrics of the education industry in Nigeria is a corollary that calls These social vices are considered as social and educational plagues because like the plague of locust on farms, are disastrous and its numerous influx are unwholesome for decent lifestyles.

Insight into Student's Academic Performance

Academic performance is an assessment of the students' results in examinations such as terminal and seasonal examinations. According to Elujekwute (2019) academic performance which is synonymous to academic achievement is commonly measured by examination or continuous assessment. In the same vein, Bossaert, Doumen, Buyse and Verschieren (2011) defined academic performance as students' success in meeting short or long term goals in education. In the views of Elujekwute (2019) a student who earns good grades or awards in science has achieved in the academic field of science. Similarly, Wodi and Dokubo (2005) conceptualizes academic achievements (Performances) as the knowledge obtained or skills developed in the school subjects usually designed by test scores or marks assigned by the teacher. In view of the foregoing, one can confidently define academic performance as the attainment of educational aims and objectives by the students after having undergone a period of teaching and learning. It includes the performance of students in internal and external

examinations to the satisfaction of the examiners. This implies that for the students to record high academic performance, moderating factors in the teaching and learning process should be adequately controlled to achieve desired results. The prevalence of social vices in our society has originated from different sources. Igwe (2014), Ikechukwu (2014), and Erika and Elda (2015) identified causative factors to include perceived and presumed oppression, persistent lawlessness occasioned by a weak or compromised judicial system, absence of dedicated moral champions, lack of working security machinery to combat social vices, socioeconomic crises, persistently poor governance, among others. These causes, in addition to youthful exuberance that has predominated adolescents' and young adults lifestyle have bred a myriad of anti-social behaviors in secondary schools in Nigeria.

Concept of Social Vices

The term vices is a Latin word "vitium" meaning defect or failing. It is defined as a bad habit or immoral activities. Vices are common among young males and females, example include prostitution, indecent dressing, robbery, cultism, pocket picking, drug addiction, examination malpractice, hooliganism, thuggery, gambling, smoking, pre-marital sexual activities, rape, alcoholism, taking of illegal substances among others. Social vices are bad traits, unhealthy and frowned at by members of the society. Social vices simply put are behaviors which are at variance with societal expectations based on established moral codes. According to Igwe (2014) social vices are anti-social actions which breach societal norms, values and more and they range from obscene dressing to sexual harassment and promiscuity, cultism, kidnapping, examination malpractice, hooliganism, character assassination, impersonation, financial fraud, and among others. According to Omonijo, Nnedum, Fadugba, Uche and Biereenu-Nnabugwu (2013) social vices are any actions exhibited either by omission or commission on negligence which contravenes cultural values and established codes of conduct of a particular community or in a given situation or location. It has been observed in recent times that youths in Nigeria secondary schools are more vulnerable to social vices. The increase in the number of youths involved in social vices in recent times calls for serious attention. It then becomes imperative to find a solution to the involvement of the youths in social vices so as not to produce a generation of vipers and corrupt society and for the further of our great nation to be sustained.

Forms of Social Vices in Nigerian Senior Secondary Schools

The forms or types of social vices that commonly occur in secondary schools in Nigeria are:

Examination Malpractice: Examination malpractice is any examination not conducted in accordance with specified norms set by the examination institutions. Elujekwute (2019) defines examination malpractice as any irregular behavior exhibited by candidates or anybody charged with the conduct of examination in or outside the examination hall before, during or after such an examination. Examination malpractice simply means all forms of misconduct associated with the conduct of an examination which could take place before, during and after such examination. In other hand, malpractice refers to counter practice that is against ethics of examination. According to Olusasnami (2014) it is an act of disrespect to all rules and regulations guiding the good conduct of any examination or any evaluation process. In recent times, examination malpractice has gone from simple 'giraffing' to a variety of sophisticated methods. There are many causes of examination malpractice in Nigeria but only a few shall be mentioned here for lack of space. Chukwuemeka and Aghara (2013) opine that one of the major causes of examination malpractice can be attributed to moral decadence in Nigeria. The grave consequences of examination malpractice on the youths cannot be overemphasized such that examination malpractice has various negative effects on the society such as destruction of

academic image, psychological trauma on innocent students, poor study habits, moral decadence and among others.

Truancy and Absenteeism: Other social vices prevalent in the Nigerian secondary schools are truancy and absenteeism. The situation is so worrisome to the extent that Dagih (2015) laments that it is a common sight to run into multitudes of students closing before closure hours while other bunches deliberately absent themselves from classes. These habits when it persists breed people who turn out to be lazy and display nonchalant attitudes towards societal obligations.

Cultism: Cultism is a system of religious belief and practice or an ideology. Erika and Elda (2015) defines secret cults as a group of people who share and propagate peculiar secret beliefs divulged only to members. In addition, their initiation procedures often involve secret rituals like swearing-by some deity, human blood and other procedures, which send shivers down the spines of most people. Occultism or possession of mystical power is often associated with cults. However, because of their rather secret modus operandi, the veracity of this thinking is difficult to ascertain. Sometimes, secret cults attend functions of members like marriages, burial ceremonies, naming ceremonies and the like. Some secret societies appear in uniforms that are usually odd and easy to identify. Non-members that appear in their uniforms (usually black over black) are harassed, embarrassed and even beaten or killed. Some of their clandestine activities include nocturnal meetings in very odd places like cemeteries, valleys, abandoned buildings, among others. They usually engage themselves in gangsters' activities like taking of cocaine, marijuana (Indian hemp) and even drink human blood. They take delight in seeing fellow human beings suffer and die gruesomely.

Drug Abuse: Drugs include what are commonly called medicine and not only substances which alter mood, perception or normal awareness as some people erroneously believe. A drug, according to Yusuf (2014) and Igwe (2014) is a substance of biological or chemical origin which when applied to a living tissue produces an effect. Drug abuse refers to the use, especially by self-administration, of any drug in a manner that deviates from approved medical or social patterns within a given culture.

Government agencies refer to any use of an illicit substance as drug abuse for example heroin, marijuana (Indian hemp). The causes of drug abuse among students are not too different from those of adults. Oromareghake, Arisi and Igbo (2013) notes that drug abuse has many causes via: cultural, social, economical, psychological and family pathology. These causes include drug abuse through ignorance; deliberate drug abuse, drug abuse for pleasure; drug abuse for curiosity; incorrect drug dosage; drug habit and addiction; home, school or work environment; personal feeling of inadequacy; and membership of group/peer pressure. Some of the above causes are of particular interest to the educationist. For instance, it has been shown that most of the students who take drugs to aid them with their studies are those with poor educational records and sometimes also have a history of instability and family social problems.

Bullying and Fighting: In secondary schools, bullying and fighting is another social vices associated with students. In Nigeria of nowadays, it has become breeding grounds for touts and militia. Omonijo, Nnedum, Fadugba, Uche and Bierrenu-Nnabugwu (2013) notes that, students brazenly engage in bullying young ones or fighting among themselves. They stressed that there have been cases where students of secondary schools have gone on rampage manhandling fellow students and even teachers. Students have at times gone wild causing arson and maiming mates and younger ones in the name of gangsters.

Sexual Promiscuity: Sexual promiscuity among students of secondary schools in Nigeria is another serious vice that calls for serious concern. Most of the students who for the first time gain some social freedom from their parents' watchful eyes and guidance easily fall prey to the

temptation of tasting the forbidden fruit. Some of them become so wild on the illicit lovemaking that they give most of their time and attention to it to the detriment of their studies. Igwe (2014) and Oluwasanmi (2014) maintain that they become so much engaged in nocturnal activities that they sleep throughout the daytime in hostels or during lectures for those who would want to register their presence in classes. Some other ones completely abandon their lectures to keep appointments with boy-friends or “sugar daddies”. Sexual “promiscuity has lead to unwanted pregnancy, babies or even pre-mature death. In an attempt to get rid of an unwanted pregnancy, complications may result which may lead to hospitalization and absence from lectures for those who may survive.

Causes of Social Vices in Nigerian Secondary Schools

The causes of social vices in Nigerian secondary schools include the following:

Peer Group: This is the major cause of youth involvement in social vices. Students spend more time with their friends in schools or at home. Due to their weak nature and tender age they can easily be influence. Children have high level of curiosity to learn, to have fun and practice new things. Agree with me the proverb that says “show me your friends and I will tell you who you are” because it shows the significance of friends and how they influence lives. A child tends to behave like his or her friends so are labeled as cowards, JJC’s, uncivilized or crude. A child who moves with children with poor academic performance can be like them in no time and will be lured to the short cuts to success such as examination malpractice. Being a virgin, which was once a thing of pride has now turned into an object of ridicule among students now. Parents and peer group seem to extend almost equal importance by the time children are well grown up into adolescence. Thus, the peer group provides the developing child with a broad range of behaviors, cultural and sub-cultural values. It is worthy of note that being integrated into a group in which drug use and approved is one of the strongest factors leading youths into illegal drugs and other social vices.

Negligence: Another cause of social vices is negligence by the parents or a broken home. Most children that engage themselves in vices are from broken homes. Lack of parental care supervision and attention can make children from the permissive and uninvolved parenting styles fall mostly into these traps. They move with wrong people, their movements are not queried; there academic progress is not being followed up. Negligence of parents can make the wards turn to their friends for love, emotions, care, advice that can lure them into deadly acts. An abandoned girl looks up to an opposite sex for love and affection vice versa. Some maids, house helps, family members and neighbors who are always around children in the absent of parents can introduce these children to sexual acts, warn and threaten them not to tell anyone. Even if the bold ones are determined to confide in their parents, they (parents) may be too busy or occupied to listen and see through things. Parental negligence to child’s way of life is very vital, in any Child’s behavioral attitude; the parent plays a huge role in the development of that attitude and whether genetic or during maturation stages of development of the child.

To Boost Self-Efficacy: Sometimes secondary schools students engage in social vices because they want to change or alter the way they feel, “to feel happier or better, to avoid pains, stress or frustration”. Yusuf (2014) observes that they want to forget or to remember, to be accepted or be sociable sometimes to escape from burden or just to satisfy curiosity. However, in the long run, people who engage in one social vice or the other in the hope of solving one problem or the other run the risk of getting trapped in a spiral of increasing drug use that created new problems and finally leads to drugs dependence which worsens already worse situation.

The Mass Media: Evidence abounds that children, youths and undergraduates who watch’ a lot of television programme learn to rely on stereotypes of the various groups presented by the media. Iya (2018) reports that these children then transfer what they have learned from

television to real life situations. This, if the stereotype was presented and always watched by a child favors drugs taking the child will imbibe the culture of drug taking.

Perceived Impact of Social Vices on Students' Academic Performance of Senior Secondary Schools in Nigeria

Social vices affect the society as a whole and individual in particular. The mental, physical, academic, moral aspect of an individual are negatively affected students divert their time to these vices instead of being serious with academic works. There is wastage of time which leads to poor academic performance.

Deadly diseases: Deadly diseases that can lead to the termination of lives and career can be contacted. A pregnant lady will face emotional, psychological trauma which will make her loss focus and attention on her studies. She might eventually stop schooling, get expelled or quit for some period of time, if she is lucky, she may return to school but her mates will be far ahead of her.

Dangerous act: Dangerous acts like cultism are rampant in schools. Greater attention is given to the cult to the detriment of academics. Much demand is expected from members. The cult is their priority while any other things including their studies are secondary. They forget their primary assignment in school by focusing on meeting the needs of other members, fighting, and initiation of innocent students. Being in a secret cult expose a child to other forms of illegal acts such as smoking, alcoholism, rape, taking of illegal substances, hooliganism, thuggery and others. They may lose their lives in fights or when there is a clash with opposing cults and some may be rusticated from schools. They might even progress to higher crimes such as highway and bank robbery. Rapist and their victims are exposed to sexual diseases like AIDS and other related STD. Female students might stop education due to early pregnancy. High numbers of student who engage in evil acts in a school reduce the morality and standard of the school. Parents tend to withdraw their wards from schools and the change of institution might have negative effects on students.

Lead to Self Destruction: Social vices lead to self- destruction of youth because when they are apprehended by law enforcement agencies, it may lead to their imprisonment, killing and many youth may become disabled when any of their sensitive organs are hit by gun or cutlass when attack by a rival cult or gang. Igwe (2014) states that a group of students that had indulged in the consumption of illicit drugs were found exhibiting severe mental complications and as such could not continue with their education. This will subsequently affect their performance in the labor market and the outside society.

The Psychological States of Students: Social vices may alter the psychological equilibrium of the students and may result to severe mental issues which force the victims to withdraw from regular school programmes. Oromareghake *et al.*, (2013) found out that students who engaged in social vices such as cultism, hooliganism and gangsterism ingested certain toxic substances that they thought could make them bolder. The acidic radicals in such substances like drugs impact negatively on their brains and it result to loss of mental balance. In a situation like this, such students can no longer concentrate on their studies and invariably perform poorly both in internal and external examinations.

Vandalization of school plant: Social vices such as gangsters lead to vandalization of school plant thereby impacting negatively on their studies and subsequent performance in academic tasks. Oluwansanmi (2014) reports cases where students went on rampage and burnt down entire school buildings and other valuable school plants. The end result in a situation like this, is that when finally normalcy returns in such schools, there will be shortage of pertinent school plant and this will negatively impact on teaching and learning which will also affect the performance of the students' academic achievement as well as in examinations.

Conclusion

The purpose of setting up secondary schools to prepare students for further academic endeavors and occupational opportunities. This and other parameters are used to measure the academic performance of the students. The performance of students should not be affected by any limiting factor. It has been found that social vices negatively impact on students' academic performance. This must be controlled and eradicated.

Recommendation/Way-forward

To combat the prevalence of social vices and their subsequent impact on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Nigeria, the following recommendations were therefore made.

1. Social vices need to be curbed. Youths that engage in these dangerous acts need help, advice and rehabilitation for the addicted ones. Parents need to know their children's friends, status and their academic performance and this is majorly the role of our mothers also, should be close to their children. Close monitoring and time should be given to children by parents. Children should be taught the moral values and the word of God; this might help as a solution.
2. The educational administrators should ensure that adequate facilities such as classrooms or lecture halls and laboratories should be provided to ensure effective check and control of social vices in secondary schools.
3. Schools should have a high level of discipline; any student seen as a threat to others should be cautioned and rehabilitated.
4. Counseling centers' in our schools should braze up to their responsibilities of counseling students and provide follow up for students who renounces, and also our leaders should lead by good example and provide basic amenities for the students in secondary schools so as to decrease incidences of social vices.
6. Good behaviors should be rewarded and deviant ones sanctioned to serve as deterrence to intending culprits, also teachers should lead by example and should be firm yet fair in dealing with deviant students.

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