

## Factors Determining the Effectiveness of Secondary Schools in Nigeria

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**KEYWORDS** Cognitive. Affective and Psychomotor Achievements. School Facilities. Teachers' Quality. Learning Environment

**ABSTRACT** The study examined the factors determining the effectiveness of secondary schools in Nigeria. The study was a descriptive research design of the survey type. The population comprised all the teachers, principals as well as parents of students in public secondary schools in south – west Nigeria. The sample comprised 1200 teachers, 300 parents and 60 principals from 60 secondary schools. Multi-stage random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Three sets of instruments were used to collect the data for the study. The data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentage scores and multiple regression analysis. The study revealed that the secondary schools were effective in the affective and the psychomotor domains but not effective in the cognitive domain. The study further revealed that learning environment, monitoring of students' progress, school facilities and teachers' quality made significant contributions to school effectiveness. Learning environment was the best predictor of school effectiveness. It was therefore recommended that the government and school administrations should intensify efforts towards improving the level of cognitive achievement while more emphasis should be placed on institutional factors such as teachers' quality, learning environment, school facilities and monitoring of students' progress in order to improve the effectiveness of schools.

### INTRODUCTION

The increasing awareness of the importance of education to the upliftment of the individual and societal standards has awakened in people and nations a conscious effort at devoting their meager resources to acquiring qualitative education. Secondary education is very fundamental in the provision of functional education to the citizens of the country. In view of this, Federal Government of Nigeria (2004) in the National Policy on Education asserted that the broad aims of secondary education within the overall objectives are preparing students for useful living within the society and preparing them for higher education.

It appears that the secondary schools are not living up to expectation in the provision of qualitative education to the citizenry. In recent time, there is public outcry on the persistent poor performance of students in public examinations. According to West African Examination Council (WAEC 2007), the percentage of failure rate for English language in the past five years surpasses that of the percentage of credit level in Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) conducted by it between 2001 and 2005. While in Mathematics, a fluctuating trend was recorded by the candidates within the years. Besides, Saturday

Punch Newspaper of September 27, 2008 showed that out of a total of 1,369,142 candidates that sat for West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in Nigeria in 2008, only 188,442 representing 13.76% obtained five credit passes and above in English Language, Mathematics and three other subjects. While 947,945 candidates representing 83% failed the examination. The analysis posits that all is not well with students' performance in the secondary schools.

Experience has shown that traits like honesty, hard work, punctuality, self-denial and self-discipline which are necessary conditions for effective citizenship have disappeared into the thin air in the secondary schools. Students these days appear to be lazy, dishonest and always search for shortcuts to success. To them there is no dignity for labour except for things that will give them quick money. It has also been observed that very few graduates of secondary schools these days can communicate effectively or exhibit evidence of good and solid education background. It appears that graduates of secondary schools have poor mastery of English language, lack requisite technical skills, oral and written communication. All these are pointers to the ineffectiveness of the secondary schools in the country.

According to Ige (1998), there is an ocean of difference between the type of education received by the present generation and that of the past generation. The author was of the opinion that children of today are not receiving the right type of education which other children were privileged to receive in the past. It appears secondary schools in Nigeria are no longer effective. Secondary school effectiveness in the context of this study refers to the ability of secondary school to achieve its predetermined goals in the three domains of learning, namely, cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. Townsend (1994) posited that criteria for measuring the effectiveness of a school should incorporate more than achievement. According to Osakinle (2006), education is not just about literacy and numeracy, it also encompasses value-formation, value-orientation and regeneration. The author posited that the cognitive, affective and the psychomotor domains, all combined to give a qualitative education.

However, the perceived ineffectiveness of the secondary schools could be attributed to a lot of factors among which are principals' leadership behaviour, teachers' quality, availability of school facilities, the learning environment, parents' involvement in school administration, expectation on students' success and monitoring of students' progress. The behaviour of leaders has been identified as one of the major factors influencing the productivity of subordinates in any organisation. Ibukun (1997) posited that without leadership, an organisation can be best described as a scene of confusion and chaos. Experiences have shown that some principals of the secondary schools are not conscious of the need and necessity for involving teachers in routine administrative activities. It also appears that many of the school principals are deficient in the possession of relevant supervisory competencies. Gray (1990), Diane (1991), Meade (1994), Yakmalian (1995) and Despaquale (1996), submitted a positive correlation between principals' leadership behaviour and school effectiveness.

It has been observed that some teachers do not possess the relevant certificate to be in the teaching profession. These sets of people may be brilliant but the fact is that the pedagogy of teaching. It appears experienced teachers are gradually withdrawing from the service while the attrition rate in the service is becoming high.

Teachers' quality in terms of qualification and experience also seem to influence the effectiveness of the school. Fitch and Fisher (1979), Aderounmu and Ehiamentolor (1985) and Adewuyi (2002), submitted that the extent of success or the achievement of educational goals and objectives depend strictly upon the quality of teachers in the system. Personal visits of the researchers to some schools have shown that the physical facilities have not been in good shape. In some cases, students sit on the ground to receive lessons. Many of the classrooms, laboratories, halls, libraries and office furniture are in a terrible state and in need of repairs. The learning environment seems to be very uncondusive for teaching-learning activities. Availability of school physical facilities and the conduciveness of the school learning environment have also been said to be potent factors influencing school effectiveness. The quality and quantity of school facilities such as classrooms, offices, library, laboratories and the likes enhance the quality of teaching and learning. The conduciveness of the learning environment is a prerequisite to the achievement of school goals. Adeboyeje (1984), Adedeji (1998) and Owoye (2000) submitted positive relationship between school facilities and school effectiveness. In the same vein, Creemers (1994) submitted positive relationship between learning environment and school effectiveness.

It has also been noticed that school principals do not involve the parents in the administration of the schools for fear of being criticised. The non-inclusion of parents in school administration by principals appears to contribute to school ineffectiveness. Studies have shown that parental presence in the school activities and participation in committee's events and other school activities all has positive effects on school effectiveness (Sammons et al. 1995; Ajayi 1999).

Again, it appears that teachers' expectation of students' success appear to be low these days. In some cases, teachers do not give challenging tasks to students where they can use their creative thinking and imagination in solving problems. It has been discovered that teachers no longer monitor students' progress in schools. There are instances where records of performance are no longer kept and where they are kept, they are haphazardly kept. Expectation of students' success by teachers by giving challenging tasks to the students as well as how the teachers

monitor the progress of the students by keeping their records of performance for evaluation purpose have also be found out to effect positively on the effectiveness of schools. While Levine and Lezotte (1990), Schereenes (1992) submitted a positive relationship between expectation of students' success and school effectiveness, Lezotte (1989), Scheerens (1992) and Davenport and Anderson (2002) also submitted that monitoring of students progress is significantly related to school effectiveness.

### Purpose of the Study

The study investigated the extent of secondary school effectiveness in the three domains of learning (affective, psychomotor and the cognitive domains). The study also find out the relative contributions of factors such as principals' leadership behaviour, teachers' quality, school facilities, learning environment, parents' involvement in school administration, expectation on students' success and monitoring of students' progress to school effectiveness. Based on the findings, recommendations were made on how to improve on the effectiveness of secondary schools.

### METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for the study. The population consisted of all teachers, principals as well as parents of the students in public secondary schools in south-west Nigeria. The sample was 1560 respondents comprising 1200 teachers, 300 parents and 60 principals selected from 60 secondary schools.

Multi-stage random sampling technique was

used to select the sample. The first stage involved the use of simple random sampling technique to select three states out of the six states in south-west Nigeria. The states selected were Ekiti, Ondo and Osun States. The second stage involved the use of proportional stratified random sampling technique to determine the number of schools per state, the last stage involved the use of a simple random sampling technique to select 20 teachers and 5 parents per school. All the principals of the selected schools were included in the sample. Three sets of instruments were used for this study. The first instrument was a questionnaire tagged "Secondary School Effectiveness Questionnaire (SSEQ)", the second instrument was tagged "Parents Involvement in School Administration Questionnaire (PISAQ) and the third instrument was a proforma designed to collect students' results in the Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) for 3 years (2005–2007) from the schools. The SSEQ, PISAQ and the proforma were for the teachers, parents and principals respectively.

The instruments were validated by research experts in the areas of educational planning and tests and measurements both within and outside the University of Ado-Ekiti. Test-retest method of reliability was used for the two instruments while Pearson product moment correlation was used to determine their reliability coefficients, which stood at 0.87 and 0.82 for SSEQ and PISAQ respectively. The data collected for the study were analysed using frequency counts, percentage scores and multiple regression analysis.

### RESULTS

Results in Table 1 reveal the effectiveness of secondary schools in the affective domain in

**Table 1: Effectiveness of secondary schools in the affective domain**

S. No.	Items	Agree		Disagree	
		N	%	N	%
1.	Students' value cultural heritage of the society.	942	78.9	251	21.1
2.	The students are disciplined.	896	75.1	297	24.9
3.	The students are obedient to school authority.	931	78.0	262	22.0
4.	The students are honest	852	71.4	341	28.6
5.	The students are respectful	910	76.3	283	23.7
6.	The students give respect to national symbols (National flag)	942	78.9	251	21.1
7.	The students display love for fatherland.	934	78.3	259	21.7
8.	There is love for one another among students of this school.	1004	84.4	189	15.6
9.	The students are punctual in school activities	861	72.2	332	27.8
	Mean		77.1		22.9

south-west Nigeria. Prominent among the factors for school effectiveness as agreed to by the respondents are love for one another among students (84.4%); students value cultural heritage (78.9%); students give respect to national symbols (78.9%); and students display love for fatherland (78.3%). Others include: students are obedient to school authority (78.0%); students are respectful (76.3%); students are disciplined (75.1%); punctuality in school activities (72.2%); and students are honest (71.4%). On an average, 77.1% of the respondents agreed that the schools in the south-west Nigeria were effective in the affective domain. This shows that secondary schools were effective in the affective domain.

Results in Table 2 reveal effectiveness of secondary schools in the psychomotor domains. Prominent among the factors as agreed to by the respondents are level of skills of students in sporting activities (78.4%); level of skills in cultural activities (72.9%); skills in drama activities (63.5%) and mastery of pre-vocational skills (61.0%); the least is computer literacy of the students (46.1%) followed by the communication skills in English Language (50.7%). Results in the table reveal that on the average 61% of the respondents agreed that secondary schools in the southwest Nigeria are effective in the psychomotor domains.

Table 3 shows students' academic performance in the sampled states. The table reveals

that in 2004/2005 session, 18.95% of the students had 5 credits and above, while 21.08% had 4 credits and 59.96% had less than 4 credits. In 2005/2006 session, 22.63% of the students had 5 credits and above, 20.00% had 4 credits. In 2006/2007 session, 24.5% of the students had 5 credits and above, 21.08% had 4 credits while 54.31% had less than 4 credits. The result showed that, on the average for the three years, only 22.06% of the students had 5 credits and above, while 20.72% had 4 credits and 57.21% had less than 4 credits. This shows that the schools were not effective in the cognitive domain.

Table 4 shows that there is a significant multiple correlations between the institutional factors and school effectiveness. The table also shows that all the institutional factors accounted for 74.1% of variance in school effectiveness. This implies that other factors other than the ones used in the study accounted for 25.9% of school effectiveness.

Table 4 also shows that learning environment is the best predictor of school effectiveness with a beta weight of 0.482. Next to this is monitoring of students' progress (0.453), school facilities (0.371), followed by teachers' quality (0.202). Teachers' quality, school facilities, learning environment and monitoring of students' progress made significant contribution to school effectiveness while principals' leadership behaviour,

**Table 2: Effectiveness of secondary schools in the psychomotor domains**

S. No.	Items	Agree		Disagree	
		N	%	N	%
1.	Students display high level skills in cultural activities.	869	72.8	324	27.2
2.	The students communicate very well with one another in English Language.	605	50.7	588	49.3
3.	The students are computer literate.	549	46.1	644	54.0
4.	The students display high level of skills in sporting activities.	728	61.0	465	39.0
5.	Students have mastery of pre-vocational skills in the junior secondary schools.	627	52.6	566	47.4
6.	The students display high level of skills for self – employment.	758	63.5	435	36.5
7.	The students display skills in drama activities	720	60.4	473	39.6
8.	The students display skills in laboratory activities.	935	78.4	258	21.6
Mean		60.6		39.0	

**Table 3: Effectiveness of secondary schools in the cognitive domain**

	5 credits and above		4 credits		Less than 4 credits		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
2004/2005	1220	18.95	1357	21.08	3860	59.96	6437	100
2005/2006	1493	22.63	1320	20.00	3786	57.37	6599	100
2006/2007	1536	24.61	1316	21.08	3390	54.31	6242	100
Mean	22.06		20.72		57.21		100	

**Table 4: Multiple regression on the relative contributions of the determinants to school effectiveness**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Regression coefficient (B)</i>	<i>Explained variation</i>	<i>Beta weight</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Principals' leadership behaviour	0.246	0.135	0.156	1.815	0.075
Teachers' quality	1.048	0.397	0.202	2.641*	0.011
School facilities	0.465	0.115	0.371	4.049*	0.000
Learning environment	1.542	0.338	0.482	4.565*	0.000
Parents' involvement in school administration	0.78	0.109	0.057	0.718	0.476
Expectation on students' success	0.222	0.551	0.061	0.404	0.688
Monitoring of students' progress	1.358	0.413	0.453	3.282*	0.002
Constant	25.829	6.858		3.766	0.0000
Multiple R	= 0.861				
R Square	= 0.741				
F	= 21.383*				
* Significant, P<0.05					
SE = 0.156PLB + 0.202TQ + 0.371SF + 0.482LE + 0.057PIS + 0.06ESS + 0.453MSP					
Dependent variable: school effectiveness					

parents' involvement in school administration and expectation on students' success did not make significant contribution to school effectiveness.

## DISCUSSION

The study revealed that secondary schools in the south-west were effective in the affective and the psychomotor domains but not effective in the cognitive domain. The study showed that the students did very well in the area of moral values and manipulative skills. This could promote the cultural values of the society and the acquisition of relevant skills for self-employment among the school leavers. The ineffectiveness of the secondary schools in cognitive domain confirms the apprehension of members of the public, WAEC officials and government alike as expressed in the dailies, journals and periodicals regarding the poor performance of students in public examinations.

The implication of the poor performance in WASSCE is that few secondary school students will have access to university education. This may not augur well for a society that believes in human capital as a requisite for economic growth and development. A very good performance in the three domains of learning is what the schools must strive to achieve. The study also revealed that the combination of the institutional factors such as principals' leadership behaviours, teachers' quality, school facilities, learning environment, parents' involvement in school administration, expectation of students' success, and monitoring of students' progress accounted for large percentage of the variations in school

effectiveness. This means that these factors are very crucial in determining school effectiveness. Of all the institutional factors, teachers' quality, school facilities, learning environment and monitoring of students made significant contribution to school effectiveness. This means that these factors require more attention in the school system in order to improve the effectiveness of the schools.

The study showed that learning environment was the best predictor of school effectiveness. This might be due to the fact that an environment that provides a conducive atmosphere for teaching-learning activities, devoid of rancour among teachers and students, will definitely enhance good instructional delivery and better learning. The implication is that if the environment is not conducive, teaching-learning activities may be in jeopardy. The finding is in line with Adewuyi (2002). The study also revealed that parents' involvement in school administration made the least contribution to school effectiveness. This could be as a result of their inadequate involvement in various aspects of school administration. In several cases, their involvement is usually restricted to giving financial support to complement government's efforts in funding the school system.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the secondary schools in south-west Nigeria were doing well in the affective and the psychomotor domains but not living up to expectation in the cognitive domain. It was also

concluded in the study that learning environment, monitoring of students' progress, school facilities and teachers' quality made significant contributions to school effectiveness. Moreover, learning environment was the best predictor.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

It was therefore recommended that the government, school administrators and other stakeholders in the secondary education sector, such as parents, philanthropists and non-governmental organizations should not relent in sustaining the tempo of the affective and psychomotor achievements of the students. At the same time, efforts should be intensified towards improving upon the level of cognitive achievement. This will enhance improvement on the general level of school effectiveness. Since factors like learning environment, monitoring of students' progress, school facilities and teachers' quality made significant contribution to school effectiveness, government should continue to lay emphasis on these areas in order to keep on improving the level of effectiveness of secondary schools.

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