Students' Academic Engagement and Factors That Hinder Academic Achievement among Senior Secondary School Students in Nigeria: A Case Study of Abuja Municipal Area Council (Amac) Area Council, Abuja.

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Abstract

This research examined 'Students' Academic Engagement And Factors That Hinders Their Academic Achievement Among Senior Secondary School Students In Nigeria, A Case Study of Abuja Municipal Council (AMAC)'. The study adopted a descriptive study in carrying out the research method. The questionnaire was used to gather sources for information, collecting and collation of the data. The SSS I – III students comprising both genders of some selected senior secondary schools in AMAC were the source of this research data. A total of two-thousand (2000) students from the selected senior secondary schools took part in the study. The data collected was done by converting the frequency of responses to percentages. The study revealed that students were actively

engaged academically, it was also found out that, the students academic engagement provided a good and positive outcome. Furthermore, it was found that several factors such as social media, browsing environment, religion, and others were factors that hinder student academic achievement. The study study submits that; the teacher, school, and parents should have strong collaboration to provide more opportunities for students to maximize their academic engagement in all faced of their educational pursuit most especially in the senior secondary school in which this study is concerned.

Keywords: Students, Academic, Academic Engagement, Academic Achievement, Senior Secondary School, AMAC.

Introduction

Academic engagement not only in Nigeria encouraged to help the students assimilate and learn faster, but deliberate efforts have also been made by stakeholders towards ensuring students at all levels are academically engaged, perhaps; this explains why curriculum planners and other educational stakeholders have agitated for a student centre learning approach instead of the normal culture of teacher centred. Since education is the bedrock of any society, the continuous emphasis for students to be engaged academically cannot be over-emphasized.

Academic engagement happens when students dive deep into learning activities when they are mentally and emotionally absorbed by the study materials, and often when interacting with peers. Academic engagement goes beyond "surface learning" (Hattie, 2003) like content memorization and fulfilling requirements to achieve a passing grade for a course. It draws students into intense thinking activities like analyzing and understanding concepts, rationalizing procedures, and deducing meaning. It involves social interaction with peers and the teacher, in the form of exchanging experiences, knowledge, opinions, and support.

Student engagement is one of the important constructs that is used to understand the behaviour of the student towards the teaching-learning process. Understanding the behaviour of students in academic institutions will provide a glimpse of how the instructions and academic practices are going on in the

university. As such, it could be used as a powerful tool by teachers and academic supervisors to design effective pedagogical techniques to maximize the learning experiences of the students. The data on student engagement has the advantage of providing information on what students are doing. The data has a broader significance for the management of institutions, students and academic programmes. Rather than work from assumptions or partial anecdotal reports about student activities, institutions can make decisions based on more objective information. Information about student activities would provide institutions with valuable information for marketing and recruitment and help them become more responsive to student learning needs. Only with accurate and reliable information on what students are doing can institutions move beyond taking student activities for granted. (Coates, 2005).

Student engagement refers to meaningful engagement throughout the learning environment. It is best understood as a relationship between the student and the school, teachers, peers, instruction and curriculum (Martin and Torres). The term has its historic roots in a body of work concerned with student involvement, enjoying widespread currency, particularly in North America and Australasia, where it has been firmly entrenched through annual large-scale national surveys (Trowler, 2010).

Student engagement has three dimensions which are behavioral, emotional, and cognitive. Behavioural engagement refers to student's participation in academic and extracurricular activities. Emotional engagement refers to student's positive and negative reactions to peers, teachers and school. While cognitive engagement talks about student's thoughtfulness and willingness to master difficult skills (Fredericks, et al., 2004).

The theory of Student involvement stresses that the greater the student's involvement in college, the greater will be the amount of student learning and personal development, (Astin, 1984). Productive engagement is an important means by which students develop feelings about their peers, professors, and institutions that give them a sense of connectedness, affiliation, and belonging, while simultaneously offering rich opportunities for learning and development (Bensimon, 2009). The time and energy students devote to educationally

purposeful activities is the single best predictor of their learning and professional development. Those institutions that more fully engage their students in the variety of activities that contribute to valued outcomes of college can claim to be of higher quality compared with other colleges and universities where students are less engaged (Kuh, 2001).

This study looked at; 'Students' Academic Engagement And Factors That Hinders Their Academic Achievement Among Senior Secondary School Students In Nigeria'. Since the scope is very large and impossible for such a study to be carried out within a given period, the Abuja Municipal Council (AMAC) of the Federal is used as a case study of the research.

Literature Review

Student engagement is not only beneficial to the academic status of the school but to its financial life too. As described by Markwell (2007) at a time when universities and colleges are increasingly focused on the importance of outreach to alumni and other potential friends of the institution to greatly increase philanthropic support for higher education, it is becoming more widely recognized that how engaged students are and feel themselves to be during their student years will have a great bearing on how connected and supportive towards the institution they are likely to be in later years.

A review of the literature reveals that school engagement is divided into three dimensions as follows: cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and behavioural engagement. Cognitive engagement refers to students' behaviours that reflect their thinking in terms of dedication which combines both ideas and willingness to take action. Emotional engagement is a positive feeling students have for their teachers, peers, and school. It is believed that the promotion of school engagement results in a willingness to work. Behavioural engagement is students' practices or behaviours that are related to studying that take place in school and bring about positive behaviours such as adherence to school rules, and having no negative behaviours.(Fredricks et al., 2004)

Coates (2007) stressed that there is growing recognition of the importance of understanding student engagement and the problem of disengagement in tertiary

institutions. Investigating factors affecting engagement and disengagement can provide insights into student performance, progression and retention. Assessment of engagement is potentially useful when evaluating the quality of student learning experiences and making decisions about resource provision, course content and delivery.

The seriousness of the university to deliver academic excellence would hardly be realized without a constant review of its academic practices. The review should be done comprehensively and collaboratively with the inputs coming from the important stakeholders of the university. A student engagement survey is one of the best tools that can provide the needed information because it provides a means to examine the whole student experience. Second, there is an important intrinsic value to engagement for university students and teachers. Last but not least, studying engagement provides a means of getting information on what students are doing, as opposed to what they are supposed or presumed to be doing. Information on actual activities is important, as it helps manage the quality and productivity of university education (Coates, 2006).

The growing importance of understanding the learning behaviours of the students and the need to revisit the academic practices of the university in making the instruction responsive to the needs of the students necessitates this study.

Student engagement refers to students' expression of opinions or attitudes and behaviours (Taylor, Hunter, Melton, & Goodwin, 2011). According to Mandernach (2009), student engagement results from intrinsic motivation or individual needs which makes students have positive feelings and continue their practices with perseverance and self-confidence. Previous studies conducted by Skinner Wellborn and Connell (1990) and Skinner and Belmont (1993) have pointed out that students' behaviours in continuously and consistently carrying out learning activities enable them to have positive emotional conditions. Also, learning activities will make students develop engagement through their participation in the activities (Skinner and Belmont, 1993)).

Objectives of the Study:
To examine students' academic engagement.
To examine students' academic engagement outcomes.
To examine factors that hinder their academic achievement.

Research Design
The study used a descriptive study through the administration of a questionnaire to determine student engagement and also look at the factors that could serve as a hindrance to their academic achievement.

Sample
The questionnaire was used to collect and assemble data from the respondents on the level of engagement and the factors affecting their engagement. The researcher adopted a purposive sampling method. The respondents of the study were randomly selected cutting across senior secondary schools in AMAC, the schools are:
Government Day Secondary School Wuse II
Government Secondary School Airport
Government Secondary School Apo
Government Secondary School Garki
Government Secondary School Jabi
Government Secondary School Gwagwa
Government Secondary School Karshi
Government Day Secondary School Karu
Government Secondary School Nyanya
Government Secondary School Kurudu

Data Analysis
Data are collected only from the sample and used the sampled data to make inferences about the entire population. The data were obtained through the process of administration of a questionnaire, which was done by converting the frequency of responses to percentages.

Population

This study is concerned with students of senior secondary school in AMAC and a population of 2000 students was used as a sample. 20 respondents were randomly selected in each of the ten schools making it a total of 2000 respondents. Their ages ranged between 16 - and 30 years above. The sample was formed by 1100 males (55%) and 900 females (45%).

Results and Discussion of Findings

The results of the findings and data collected are presented in a tabular form and discussed.

Table 1: Showing Students' Age in AMAC.

Age	**N**	**%**
12-13 years	429	21.45
14-15 years	602	30.1
16-17 years	661	33.05
18 and above	308	15.4
Total	**2000**	**100%**

Table one is the student's age showing the age grouping of the students of senior secondary schools in AMAC. 429 respondents are within the age bracket of 12-13 with 21.45%, 602 respondents between the ages of 14-15 with 30.1%, the age bracket of students between 16-17, 661 representing 33.5%, 308 respondents between the ages of 18 and above making up of 15.4.

Table 2: Showing Students'Academic Class in AMAC

SSS I	655	37.75
SSS II	685	34.25
SSS III	660	33
Total	2000	100%

Table 2 indicates the student's academic year or various levels in the institution. SSS I students that served as respondents, 655 representing 37.75%, SSS II, 685 representing 34.25% and 660 respondents representing 33% were SSS III students.

Table 3: Showing Student's Academic Engagement in AMAC

SN	Indicators of Student Engagement in Academic	SA	A	SD	D
1	Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussion	1208 (60.04%)	502 (25.75)	190 (9.5%)	100 (5%)
2	Raising my hand in class	200 (10%)	430 (22.5%)	570 (28.5%)	800 (40%)
3	Participating in small group discussions	900 (45%)	700 (35%)	120 (6%)	280 (14%)
4	Solving or doing all the homework given	510 (25.5%)	860 (43%)	155 (7.75%)	475 (23.75%)
5	Coming to class/school daily	1080 (54%)	720 (36%)	50 (2.5%)	150 (7.5%)
6	Taking notes in class	705 (35.25%)	865 (43.25%)	175 (8.75%)	255 (12.75%)
7	Working hard to get a good grade	507 (25.35%)	823 (41.15%)	360 (18%)	310 (15.5%)
8	Ensuing to study hard and regularly	301 (15.05%)	412 (20.6%)	607 (30.35%)	680 (34%)
9	Doing well on both test examinations	709 (35.45%)	611 (30.55%)	403 (20.15%)	277 (13.85%)
10	Going to the library to study	550 (17.5%)	670 (33.5%)	375 (18.75%)	405 (20.25%)
11	Taking deliberate steps to further learning such as: attending lessons, meeting others to guide, etc.	378 (18.9%)	413 (20.65%)	594 (29.7%)	615 (30.75%)

As seen in Table 3 shows senior secondary school academic engagements in AMAC. The engagement of the students in the senior secondary school is inclusive. Item I with a total of 85.79% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed they asked questions and contributed to class discussion and a total of 14.5% of respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed. Item two with percentage of 68.5%

of respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with raising their hands in the classroom to ask questions while 32.5% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed. For participating in group discussions on item 3, a total of 80% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed to participate while a total of 20% of respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed of participating. Item 4 states; that doing and solving homework strongly agree and agree by a total of 68.5% of respondents and 31.5% of respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with carrying out their assignments. A total of 90% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with attending class daily while 10% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with attending classes daily. Item 6 states; that taking notes in class, a total percentage of 75.5% of respondents strongly agree and agree to taking notes in class and 24.5% of the respondents strongly disagree and disagree with taking notes in class. 66.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed to work hard to get good grades while 33.5% of the total respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with working hard for good grades. Item 8 states; that ensuring to work hard regularly, a total of 64.35% of the respondents strongly disagree and disagree on the point while 35.65% of the total respondents strongly agree and agree to working hard regularly. A total of 66% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed to do well during the test and examination and on the other, and a total of 34% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with doing well during the test and examinations. On item 10; 60% of the total respondents strongly agreed and agreed to go to the library to study and 40% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with going to the library for studying. The last item on the table (11) states that; taking deliberate steps for further learning, a total of 60.45% of respondents strongly disagree and disagree while 39.55% of the remaining respondents strongly agree and agree of taking deliberate steps for further learning.

Table 4: Showing Student's Academic Engagement Outcome in AMAC

SN	Indicators of Academic Achievement	SA	A	SD	D
1	Made presentation in class	750 (37.5%)	825 (41.25)	273 (13.65%)	152 (7.6%)

2	Putting effort into further achievement personal academic achievement	603 (30.15%)	907 (45.35%)	103 (5.15%)	387 (19.35%)
3	Applying lessons learned to life	900 (45%)	700 (35%)	120 (6%)	280 (14%)
4	Prepared several drafts of paper or assignment before submission	860 (43%)	510 (25.5%)	155 (7.75%)	475 (23.75%)
5	Used an electronic medium to discuss or complete an assignment	720 (36%)	1080 (54%)	50 (7.5%)	50 (2.5%)
6	Put together ideas or concepts from different courses/sources when completing assignments or during class discussions.	780 (39%)	720 (36%)	200 (10%)	300 (15%)
7	Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor	823 (41.15%)	507 (25.35%)	360 (18%)	310 (15.5%)
8	Work harder than you thought you could do to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	301 (15.05%)	412 (20.6%)	607 (30.35%)	680 (34%)
9	Discussed ideas from class lessons, readings, etc., with others outside of class	713 (35.65%)	691 (34.55%)	204 (10.2%)	392 (19.6%)
10	Finding ways to make the course interesting to me	700 (35%)	670 (33.5%)	175 (8.75%)	456 (22.8%)
11	I look over class notes between classes to make sure I understand the materials	537 (26.85%)	792 (39.6%)	391 (19.55)	280 (14%)
12	Used an electronic medium for further studies and research after school	672 (33.6%)	823 (41.15%)	301 (15.05%)	204 (10.2%)

Table 4 shows the outcome of students' academic engagement in senior secondary of AMAC. Item I states that; when making a presentation in class, 78.75% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed to making the presentation in class and 21.25% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with making presentations. 75.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed to put efforts into personal academic achievement while a total of 24.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed on the point. In item 3, 80% of the total respondents strongly agreed and agreed with applying lessons learned to life and 20% of the same respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with applying lessons learned to life. Item 4 states; prepared several drafts of the paper or assignment before submission with 68.5% of the respondents strongly agreeing, on the other hand, 31.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed. 90% of the respondents strongly agree and agree with using electronic as a medium to discuss or complete assignments while 10% of the respondents strongly disagree and disagree with using electronic as a medium of carrying out assignments. A total of 75% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with putting together different sources/courses when completing assignments or making contributions in class and the remaining respondents making up 25% did not agree with it. Item 7 states that; when discussing grades or assignments with an instructor, 66.5% of the respondents strongly agree and agreed while 33.5% of the respondents strongly disagree and disagreed. 64.35% of the respondents strongly disagree and disagree that they work harder than they thought they could do to meet an instructor's standards or expectations and 35.65% of the remaining respondents strongly agree and agree they work harder to meet the instructor's standard. Item 9 states; that when discussing ideas from class lessons, readings, etc., with others outside of class, 70.2% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed while 29.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed that they discussed ideas from class lessons and readings. 68.5% of the respondents strongly agree and agreed that they find ways of making the course interesting to them and 31.5% of the respondents strongly disagree and disagreed on the point. I looked over class notes between classes to make sure I understood the materials, 66.45% of the total respondents strongly agreed and agreed, and 33.55% of the remaining respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed. The last item which is 12 states that; used an electronic medium for further studies and research after school, 74.75% of the respondents strongly agree and agreed while the remaining

respondents making up of 25.25% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with using electronic as a medium for further studies and research after school.

Table 5: Showing Factors that Hinder Students Academic Achievement in AMAC

S/N	Factors	SA	A	SD	D
1	Student	102 (5.1%)	206 (10.3%)	721(36.05%)	967 (48.35%)
2	Family	103 (5.15%)	734 (36.7%)	901 (45.05%)	263 (13.15%)
3	School	130 (6.5%)	160 (8%)	1002 (50.1%)	708 (35.4%)
4	Teacher	871 (43.55%)	903 (45.15%)	123 (6.15%)	103 (5.15%)
5	Friends	909 (45.45%)	879 (43.95%)	102 (5.1%)	110 (10.5%)
6	Peer Group	1003 (50.15%)	873 (43.65%)	26 (1.3%)	98 (4.9%)
7	Environment	589 (29.45%)	873 (43.65%)	301 (15.05%)	237 (11.85%)
8	Culture	870 (43.5%)	620 (31%)	303 (15.15%)	207 (10.35%)
9	Social Media	1107 (55.36%)	809 (40.45%)	27 (1.35%)	57 (2.85%)
10	Browsing	907 (45.35%)	708 (35.4%)	213 (10.65%)	172 (8.6%)
11	Religion	550 (27.5%)	500 (25%)	490 (24.5%)	460 (23%)

Table 5 shows factors that hinder students' academic achievement in senior secondary schools in AMAC. Item 1 is the student; the respondents of the total percentage of 84.4% strongly disagree and disagree that students are part of the factors that could hinder academic achievement while 15.6% strongly agree and agree. 58.2% of the respondents strongly disagree and agree that family is a hindrance to academic achievement and on the other hand, 41.8% of the

respondents thought that family can hinder academic achievement. Item 3 which suggests that the school could hinder academic achievement, 85.5% of the respondents strongly disagree and disagree, and 14.5% of the respondents strongly agree and agree. 88.65% of the respondents strongly agree and agreed that the teacher could hinder academic achievement while 11.35% of the same respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed. In item 5, 89.4% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that friends hinder academic achievement, and 10.6% strongly disagreed and disagreed. 93.8% of the respondents strongly agree and agreed that peer group hinders academic achievement while 6.2% strongly disagree and disagreed. In item 7, 73.1% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the environment hinders academic achievement, and 26.9% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed that the environment hinders academic achievement. Item 8 presents culture as a hindrance to academic achievement, 74.5% strongly agree and agree, and 25.5% strongly disagree and disagree that culture is a hindrance to academic achievement. Item 9 based on the responses showed that social media is a major hindrance to academic achievement with a total of 95.81% of respondents strongly agreeing and agreed, however; 4.19% of the respondents strongly disagree and disagreed. 88.75% of the total respondents strongly agree and agreed that browsing is a hindrance to academic achievement while 19.25% strongly disagree and disagreed on the point. The last item which presents religion as a hindrance to academic achievement was supported by line slide difference, the total respondents making up 52.5% strongly agree and agreed that religion is a hindrance to academic achievement and on the other hand, the remaining respondents making up of 47.5% strongly disagree and disagreed that religion is a hindrance to academic achievement.

Conclusion

It is worth mentioning that, the data collected and discussed has helped in shaping our understanding of 'Students' Academic Engagement And Factors That Hinders Their Academic Achievement Among Senior Secondary School Students In Nigeria', the study randomly selected 20 students to serve as respondents in each of the senior secondary school used as the sample, each of the classes in the senior secondary school was considered and also gender. The result of the findings showed that out of 11 items showing students' academic engagement in AMAC, 8 of the items were unanimously supported by the respondents and 3 were refuted,

meaning that students are actively engaged academically. On the outcome of students' academic engagement, out of the 12 items, only 1 item of the outcome was disagreed by the respondents while 11 of the items were agreed by the respondents meaning there is a positive outcome of the student's academic engagement. In the last table which is on factors hindering students' academic achievement, out of the 11 items presented; 3 items are said not to be factors hindering students' academic achievement while 8 items were said to hinder the student's academic achievement. Hence; this clearly shows that there are factors that hinder students' academic achievement.

It is there therefore the submission of this study that; the teacher and the school should have strong collaboration to provide the students avenues where they could maximize their engagement in senior secondary school. Maximizing student engagement would help provide meaningful learning experiences among the students.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study and after careful analysis of the data, the researcher recommends the following:

a. The senior secondary school management should create or strengthen consultation hours to accommodate the students who would be seeking clarification and advice on their academic endeavours.
b. Conduct a follow-up study, which will include more parameters on student engagement and variables on the factors hindering engagement.
c. The teacher should be transparent in computing the grades of the students. It means that the students should be given opportunities to see and challenge the computed grades. The management should give proper justification to the students who questioned his/her grades.
d. The schools should improve library services by purchasing updated editions of textbooks and reference books. Internet services should also be improved because there is a lot of useful information that is available on the World Wide Web that could motivate students to become academically engaged and develop innovative ideas.

e. The school should adopt a more student-centered teaching strategy. These strategies should provide opportunities for students to maximize their engagement in the teaching and learning process.
f. Teachers should be given subjects in line with their expertise so that maximum learning experiences can be provided to the students.
g. School management should design a training/seminar on effective student-centred teaching strategies for the faculty members.

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