INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examined institutional capacity and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State,

Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive research design of survey type. The population consists of all the 1230 teachers in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State. The senior secondary schools were stratified into three senatorial districts in the state and 40 senior public secondary schools were selected through a proportionate sampling technique and 415 (34%) teachers were selected from the sampled schools. The study adopted two instruments which were tagged "Institutional Capacity Questionnaire" (ICQ) and 'Students' Academic Performance Proforma' (SAPP) respectively. The ICQ was used to elicit responses from teachers under the sub-headings of school population, classroom availability and teacher-students ratio while SAPP was used to collect data on students' academic performance in WASSCE from 2012-2014. The ICQ was validated through face and content validities and test re-test method was adopted to assess the reliability coefficient of ICQ of which was 0.72. The data collected was analyzed with Pearson product moment correlation statistic to test all the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance. The main and the three operational hypotheses were rejected. This shows that a positive and significant relationship exist between institutional capacity and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. The study further revealed that school population, classroom availability and teacher-student ratio have positive and significant relationship with students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. The study recommended among others, that public senior secondary schools should always enroll students in line with strength (capacity) in order to avoid overpopulation and congested classrooms.

Keywords: Institutional Capacity, School Population, Classroom Availability, Teacher-Student Ratio, Students' Academic Performance.

Introduction

Institutional capacity is often considered as fuzzy and vague concept. The concept of institutional capacity has been consistently defined and measured by various researchers. However, there has been lack

of consensus on the measurement and meaning of institutional capacity both in practice and research (Idowu & Oluwole, 2014). Institutional capacity often implies a broader focus of empowerment, capital, social, and an enabling environment, as well as the values, culture and power relations that influence the society (Segnestarn, Persson, Nilsson & Arvidsson, 2002). Ogunsola (2011) viewed institutional capacity as the available organizational structures as well as processes that aid the achievement of developmental goals. Institutional capacity thus encompasses the functions (tasks) that institutions should have the competence (ability) to perform and the resources and structures they need to that end (Bhagavan & Virgin, 2004). From the various contributors earlier quoted, institutional capacity can therefore be seen as the carrying. ability (capacity) which the schools possess to carry out the desire educational tasks with the use of available resources and structures for educational goal and achievement of the students. Since vital objectives of secondary education is to prepare competent and intelligent students for post-secondary education as well as increasing competitive workforce. However, the variances in educational outcomes of students show that the impact of our current public school system is limited. There is also the fact that, measuring academic performance of students is challenging since students' academic performance is a product of many factors (Achieng, 2012).

Ahmed (2013) asserted that the origin of failure in school is the classrooms and a close look at the public schools shows that nothing good can come out of most schools as they lack appropriate and adequate resources to prepare the students for West African Secondary School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE). This statement indicated that students' mass failure in WASSCE organized examination will continue until there is improvement in resources allocated to public secondary schools. Ihebereme (2010) identified poor school building, overcrowded classrooms as well as inadequate school space in most of the schools, as factors of institutional capacity which have great influence on the students' academic performance.

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In Nigeria from researcher's perspective, Federal and State Government secondary schools in most cases are with inadequate classrooms and teachers. Whereas these schools are supposed to be model schools carrying and maintaining the ideals of secondary education for Nigerian students. This however differs from the case in most private secondary schools which tend to have adequate school space, adequate classroom, adequate teachers, modern and enabling school buildings and a better environment. These discrete variations define the institutional capacity of each category of school (Achieng, 2012).

In the case of Kwara public secondary schools, the researcher sees the role of institutional capacity towards students' academic performance as reflected in the WASSCE results. Considering all the variable discussed by different researchers, this study focuses on the following aspects of institutional capacity of public secondary schools namely; school population, classroom availability and teacher-students ratio in relation to students' academic performance.

Statement of the Problem

Inconsistencies in academic performance continued to be noticed as one of the many challenges facing education. These disparities have raised a lot of concern as the government expenditure on education was not only aimed at increasing enrolment but also ensuring that academic performance is improved in these institutions at minimum cost (Achieng, 2012). The researcher noted that Kwara State has been witnessing poor WASSCE results in recent years as a result of inadequate school space that made most of the schools to be overpopulated, inadequate classrooms where in most cases students often receive lectures under trees in most schools and inadequate teachers that made one teacher to be attached to more than sixty students (1:60) as against 1:40 prescribed in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013). Ahmed (2013) submitted that the origin of failure in school is the classrooms and a close look at the public schools shows that nothing good can come out of most schools as they lack appropriate and adequate resources to prepare the students for WASSCE. Studies such as Achieng (2012) have been conducted

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into such areas, on how institutional capacity influence academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Usigu division-Bondo district, Kenya. Therefore, this study investigated the extent to which institutional capacity determines academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to determine the relationship between institutional capacity and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine the relationship between:

1. school population and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria;
2. classroom availability and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria; and
3. teacher-students ratio and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated to assist in the conduct of this study:

Main hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between institutional capacity and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Operational Hypotheses

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between school population and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between classroom availability and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

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Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between teacher-students ratio and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Scope of the Study

The indicators that were used to measure Institutional capacity include: school population, classroom availability and teacher-students ratio. The indicator that was used for measuring the students' academic performance is their WASSCE results from 2012-2014. The scope of this study was limited to 10 Local Government Areas from the three Senatorial Districts of the State (Kwara Central, Kwara North and Kwara South). 40 public secondary schools were sampled out of 213. Four hundred and fifteen respondents were selected out of 1230 teaching staff in the selected schools. The researcher used Institutional Capacity Questionnaire' (ICQ) to collect information from the respondents on institutional capacity and 'Students' Academic Performance Pro-forma' from 2012-2014 to elicit information on the students' academic performance. The school average performance in WASSCE for three years were obtained from the principals. Pearson product-moment correlation statistics (known as Pearson-r) was used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance and for 413 degrees of freedom.

Significance of the Study

It is expected that the findings of this study would be useful to various institutions of education and personnel involved in policy formulation and implementation, more specifically Ministry of Education and Human Capital Development, and other stakeholders in public secondary schools to understand the relationship that exists between school population, adequate classrooms and teacher-students ratio on students' academic performance. The researcher hoped that these findings would be a pointer towards providing leads for intervention in areas that need improvement in public secondary schools to be able to proffer solutions to issues relating to the constantly elusive academic excellence. This findings would provide tip offs for intervention, which would help improve academic

prowess of students. It is hoped that the Ministry of Education and Human Capital Development would find the results useful in formulating better policies that would facilitate improved students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools.

Concepts of Institutional Capacity and Students' Academic Performance

Capacity in general terms, can be defined as the ability to solve problems, perform functions, and achieve set objectives (Fukuda-Parr, Lopes & Malik, 2002). Oliver (2013) postulated that capacity is the ability of individuals, institutions and societies to solve problems, perform functions and set achievable objectives in a sustainable manner. Institutional capacity can be defined as the set of characteristics related to both structural attributes and human resources that collectively define the organization's ability to perform its delegated functions. Segnestam, et al (2002) affirmed that institutional capacity often implies a broader focus of social cultural, empowerment and an enabling environment, as well as the values, culture and power relations that influence teaching and learning. Ogunsola (2011) viewed institutional capacity as the availability of organizational structure and processes that aid the achievement of developmental goals. Institutional capacity thus encompasses the functions (tasks) that institutions should have the competence (ability) to perform and the resources and structures they need to that end (Bhagavan & Virgin, 2004). Achieng (2012) described institutional capacity as the ability for an institution to decide on goals to pursue and to act on whose behalf, to perform tasks and to constantly improve performance.

The concept of institutional capacity gives meaningful focus on the broader notion of capacity. As noted by Keohane, 1988 institutions are not only discrete organizations (government agencies), but also, more generally, sets of rules, processes or practices that prescribe behavioural roles for actors, constrain activity, and shape expectations. Institutions are sources of authority (formal or informal) that structure social interactions among individuals, companies, civil society groups, governments and other entities.

Thus, institutional capacity denotes a broader "enabling environment" which forms the foundation upon which organizations and individuals interact. In this context, training of individuals and strengthening organizations can only be succeeded in the long term, if it is steady with existing institutions, or if it helps transform these institutions, so that actions are based on rules, processes and practices that can be sustained over time (Achieng, 2012). It is in this direction that this paper examined the relationship between institutional capacity and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

According to Jaag (2006), students' academic performance is a puzzling question in education, science and economics. The general approached followed by economics is to use a model of added value based on the educational production function. The method used consists of evaluating the effects of educational inputs (teachers and other resources committed) on the students' performance by taking into account other variables (socio-economic origin, characteristics and attitudes of the students). Bratty, Checci and Filippin (2007) pointed out that the dissimilarities in students' academic performance can be explained by the differences between the areas in regional leisure, type of institutions, economic terms of structures and the students' individual characteristics.

The literature on students' poor academic performance in school reveals as factors related to personal characteristics and students' environment -the school and the home (Little & Thompson, 1983). In Support of the student's environment as a factor in academic achievement, Little and Thompson (1983) also identified that the challenges resulting in poor students' academic performance may not necessarily lie with the child but with the educational system and in particular the school. It was further noted that if we control the student background, school characteristics have significant positive impact on students' academic achievement and that in many cases the effects of the school characteristics are greater than the effects of family background. Wehiace and Rutter (1985) noted that, a number of findings revealed that academic failures are caused by factors

related to the family, personal and social characteristics of the students.

Thus, these results have been insignificant in the obvious implications they carry for shaping school practice and policy. Wehiace and Rutter are of the opinion that research efforts should be better focused on understanding the characteristics of the school and how these affect the student performance rather than trying to identify factors which are least responsive to change. The duo further argue that research efforts continue to focus on the relatively fixed characteristics or attributes of the students. The effect of such research efforts may result to absolve schools from blames for their lack of success with the students' academic performance. However, Armstrong (2004) contended that performance refers to both behaviours and results, and adjustment organizational behaviours and actions of work to achieve outcomes. The issue therefore is: What are these school-related factors which undesirably affect students' academic performance in pubic senior secondary schools? In this research work the researcher develops an index to capture these institutional differences across several cases and how they influence the students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The researcher adopted descriptive research design of survey type for the study. This design is deemed appropriate because it allowed the researcher to assess the relationship which exists between institutional capacity (independent variable) and students' academic performance (dependent variable) with both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

The population consists of all the 1,230 teachers in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State. The senior secondary schools were stratified into three senatorial districts (namely Kwara Central, Kwara South and Kwara North) in the state and 40 senior public secondary schools were selected through a proportionate sampling

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technique and 415 (34%) teachers were selected from the sampled schools.

This study used two instruments. The first instrument tagged 'Institutional Capacity Questionnaire' (ICQ) was designed by the researcher, while the second instrument tagged 'Students' Academic Performance Pro-forma' (SAPP) was obtained from the schools for the study. The ICQ was used to elicit information from respondents (teachers) on institutional capacity based on school population, classrooms availability and teacher-students ratio while SAPP was used to collect information on students' academic performance in WASSCE from 2012-2014 based on the schools overall performance, that is, the average performance of the sample secondary schools in WASSCE.

The drafted questionnaire (ICQ) was presented to experts in the fields of Educational Management and Educational Measurement and Evaluation, University of Ilorin, for the purpose of validating its content. Test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument through the process of administering 20 copies of the instrument to 20 teachers, outside the selected schools within a period of two weeks interval. The data gathered was analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlation statistics and the value obtained was .72. This indicated that the instrument was reliable.

Inferential statistics of Pearson product-moment correlation statistics was used to analyze the generated hypotheses for this study at 0.05 level of significance, using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). This statistical method was used because of its germane statistical weight in drawing out the relationship which exists between institutional capacity and students' academic performance and suitable for study on ground.

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Results

Main Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between institutional capacity and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Table 1: Correlational analysis between institutional capacity and students' academic performance

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal. r-value	Cri. r-value	Decision
Institutional capacity	415	33.64	7.25	413	.874	.195	Ho Rejected
Students' academic performance	415	32.39	9.10				

As shown in Table 1, the Pearson product-moment correlation calculated r-value of .874 > critical r-value of 195 at 0.05 level of significance and for 413 degrees of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that significant relationship exists between institutional capacity and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Operational Hypotheses

HO_1: There is no significant relationship between school population and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

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Table 2: Correlational analysis between school population and students' academic performance

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal. r-value	Cri. r-value	Decision
School population	415	8.48	2.54				
				413	.596	.195	H_1 Rejected
Students' academic performance	415	32.39	9.10				

From Table 2, the Pearson product-moment correlation calculated r-value of .596 > r-value of .195 at 0.05 level of significance and for 413 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between school population and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between classroom availability and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Correlational analysis between classroom and students' academic performance

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal .r-value	Cri. r-value	Decision
Classrooms Availability	415	8.57	2.60				
				413	.658	.195	H_2 Rejected
Students' academic performance	415	32.39	9.10				

From Table 3, the Pearson product-moment correlation calculated r-value of .658 > critical r-value of .195 at 0.05 level of significance and for 413 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is significant relationship between

classroom availability and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

HO_3: There is no significant relationship between teacher-students ratio and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Correlational analysis between teacher-students ratio and students' academic performance

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal. r-value	Cri. r-value	Decision
Teacher-students ratio	415	8.36	2.35				
				413	.547	.195	Ho Rejected
Students' academic performance	415	32.39	9.10				

From Table 4, the Pearson product-moment correlation calculated r-value of .547 > critical r-value of (.195) at 0.05 level of significance and for 413 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This denotes that there is significant relationship between the teacher-students ratio and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the relationship between institutional capacity and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. One main hypothesis and three operational hypotheses were formulated and inferential statistics of Pearson product-moment correlation statistics (known as Pearson-r) was used to test all the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance and for 413 degrees of freedom and all the hypotheses formulated was rejected, and they are discussed as follows:

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The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between institutional capacity and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria was rejected. This means that institutional capacity influence students' academic performance. The finding of this study agreed with Little and Thompson (1983) who identified that the challenges resulting in poor students' academic performance may not necessarily lie with the child but with the educational system and in particular the school. This corroborates the findings of Achieng (2012) that the inadequacy of most of the school resources such as classroom, laboratory, library, teaching staff could determine the low students' academic performance.

The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between school population and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria was also rejected. This implies that there are more numbers of students than the required numbers in most of the public senior secondary schools. This finding is in line with that of Wosyanju (2005) who affirmed that over population in schools pose some teaching challenges such as delayed feed-back to students, low in quality of individual feedback resulting in inefficiency and ineffectiveness quality of students. Goodrum, Hackling and Rennie (2001) submitted a correlation between school population and quality of teaching and learning among schools in Australia. According to Osirn (2011) school population was found as one of the sub-variables of school quality exerted significant influence on assessment of students' academic performance and teachers' task performance in terms of teaching. This finding contradicts that of Oguntoye (1983) who found that school population had negative coefficient with examination performances of students.

The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between classroom availability and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria was rejected. This affirms that there are less available classrooms compare to the required numbers of classrooms in most

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of the schools. If enough classrooms are available for the students, it will create conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning. This finding is supported by Olutola (2004) who noted that the availability of required and adequate classrooms and other facilities contribute to good students' academic performance as they enhance effective teaching and learning activities. Olutola further reported that adequate classroom with aesthetic conditions contribute to higher academic performance by the students. This finding is against the submission of Samuel (1997) who did not see classroom adequacy as one of the vital factors affecting students' academic performance, because there was no evidence to show that an adequate classroom would necessarily improve students' academic performance.

The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between teacher-students ratio and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Kwara, Nigeria was rejected. This implies that, there are more students per teacher ratio than the required number expected in most of the schools. This finding is supported with the view of Huebler (2008) who noted that the teacher-students ratio is an evidence of education quality. Huebler (2008) lamented that in crowded classrooms the quality of education suffers. It will be difficult for the students to follow the course and the teacher will not have adequate time for the needs of individual student.

Conclusion

On school population, there was overpopulation in most of the schools considering the school capacity, and the consequent of this may result to poor quality of students and affect the motivation, self-esteem and morae of teachers which indirectly lead to poor students' academic performance, while under-population and adequate population provide for better classroom atmosphere for students to learn and is capable of producing positive students' academic performance. The adequacy in the numbers of available classrooms in most of the schools considering population of students and this made students to be receiving lessons in a congested classroom that does not match the population of the students may adversely affects

students' academic performance. Teachers are not sufficient to cater for the increase in population of the students in most of the schools and this has been affecting the performance of the students negatively.

Recommendations

Sequel to the outcomes of this study, the following recommendations were suggested:

1. Public senior secondary schools in Kwara State should admit students based on their school strength (capacity) as this will prevent overpopulation and over-utilization of the available school facilities.
2. Government in conjunction with Parent-Teacher's Association (PTA) and other stakeholders in education should work together towards building and making provision for more classrooms that will accommodate the required numbers of students and must be located in an area that will provide for safety and comfort of the students with adequate facilities.
3. Government in conjunction with Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) should help to recruit qualified and competent teachers that will cater for the increase in students' population in schools and teacher-students ratio of 1:40 or less should be strictly adhere to as specified in National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013).

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