

PROFESSOR (MRS.) E. O. O. BUSARI

Professor (Mrs.) Elizabeth Olanitemi Olasunmade Busari was, until her death on 1st February, 2011, a Professor in the Department of Science and Technology Education, Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria. She obtained the Nigeria Certificate in Education from Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo; B. Sc (Education) Chemistry (First Class) from University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), Ile-Ife ; M. Phil and Ph. D Curriculum Studies from the University of Lagos. Because of her passion for teaching, she also earned a Certificate of Teaching in Higher Education from the University of Zimbabwe, Harare. She equally got a Postgraduate Diploma (with Distinction) in Theology from the Bible College of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in her effort to prepare herself for service in the Vineyard of God.

Professor Busari worked as a Curriculum Development Officer in CESAC, University of Lagos; and Senior Education Programme Officer (Multicultural Environment) at the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, Abuja before joining the University of Lagos as Lecturer II in 1989. She rose to the rank of Professor in 2003. She was also a National Professional Officer, Science and Technology Education in UNESCO, Abuja between 2005 and 2006; a National Consultant to UNFPA, Abuja; a Visiting Professor at the University of Zimbabwe, Harare; Head, Department of Science and Technology Education, University of Lagos; and elected Dean, Faculty of Education in the same University.

She taught undergraduate and postgraduate courses at the Universities of Lagos and Zimbabwe. She successfully supervised three doctoral students and a number of master's degree students. She was an external examiner to some Universities in Nigeria and member of several professional associations in the field of education.

May her soul rest in perfect peace. Amen.

TRENDS AND ISSUES IN EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

A Book of Readings in memory of
PROF. (MRS.) E.O.O. BUSARI

Edited by:
AYO ALANI & SOJI ONI



Professor (Mrs.) Elizabeth Olanitemi Olanmade Busari

Trends and Issues in Education in Nigeria

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TRIUMPH-PROVIDENTIAL PUBLISHERS

Ilesa, Sagamu and Ibadan.

Head Office: DIVINE FAVOUR HOUSE,
5-7, Jide Olowookere Street, Papa Itesiwaju,
Adogba, off Alakia-Isebo Road, Ibadan.

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ISBN 978 - 8138 - 07 - 1

First Published 2011.

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Typeset by
Isiaq Ventures, Ijebu-Ode.
Tel: 0705 706 0203, 08160443410

Printed by
All Print Production,
36, Ofada Street, Mushin, Lagos.
Tel: 08028466749

Preface

This book is dedicated to the memory of a hardworking and compassionate Professor who died on February 1, 2010 and in active service as elected Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria. Professor (Mrs.) E. O. O. Busari spent more than twenty five years in public service before her unfortunate death. The late Professor was totally committed to teaching, research, community service and helping humanity. She was a mentor, counsellor, confidant, compassionate super-ordinate and helper to her junior colleagues in the Faculty of Education, University of Lagos. She was always ready to sacrifice her time to make people happy. She was admirable as an academic.

It is in recognition of these qualities in Professor Busari that distinguished scholars were asked to contribute chapters to this book. The papers published in this book were carefully selected, after a thorough review and editorial process, from all the articles submitted to the editors.

The book focuses on issues and trends in adult education; educational foundations; management in education; science and technology education; and human kinetics and health education. The book is meant for students in Colleges of Education, Faculties and Institutes of Education in Nigeria. It is also an invaluable material for scholars, policy makers, educational practitioners and the reading public who are interested in issues pertaining to Education in Nigeria.

We appreciate the efforts of the scholars whose papers appear in this book for their positive response to our call for papers. Our gratitude also goes to all those who supported this effort with words of encouragement. We also commend the late Professor for her contributions to our career and professional advancement. Our prayer is that God almighty will grant her eternal rest, protect her children and comfort the members of her family and her friends.

Finally, all correspondence regarding any of the chapters in this book should be directed to the author(s). The opinions expressed in the chapters are those of the authors. Therefore, the editors accept no responsibility for them.

*Ayo Alani
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Chapter 21

Cohorting Exercise and Socio-Academic Performance of Studnets in the University of Lagos

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Introduction

The usefulness of cohorting exercise to both the freshmen and the old students in tertiary institutions cannot be overstressed. The students need the advice and guide of their advisers to fair well academically socially emotionally and morally. The university environments are full of distractions that can sway students away if unchecked. Advisers are attached to a group of students who are pursuing the same course of study for both individual and group advising. In some cases, once the adviser starts with the students from the first year, he continues with them till the end of their programme peradventure because he/she is used to their academic, social, emotional and moral challenges of the students in his cohort.

Cohorting exercise can be described as the academic, social, emotional and moral services rendered by an expert or adviser to assist the advisees to achieve their goals maximally. Hunter and White (2004) stated that cohort advising, well developed and appropriately accessed, is perhaps the only structured campus endeavour that can guarantee students sustained interaction with a caring and concerned adult. When students utilize the advising services that

are available to them, they are often able to shape a meaningful learning experience for themselves. If students are not proactive in seeking out their adviser, they will miss the opportunity to create this experience. Students who are in regular contact with their adviser can discuss the challenges and successes they have encountered in their academic and personal lives. They may also discuss long-term career and personal goals. The advisees and advisers are working together to reach these goals, thus fulfilling the mission of the college and the advising office. Omoluabi (1993) found out that cohorting exercise for group of students help improve moral bevaaviour, academic excellence and progressive activities for self development. In the same vein, Olusakin and Ubangha (1996) maintained that individual's psycho-social development can be attributed at least to a series of group interactions and group memberships. According to NACADA (2004) students that are encouraged and guided by their cohort advisers demonstrated high retention and successful academic performance than those without.

When students are able to interact with an adviser who is concerned about their academic progress and their personal lives, they are often able to develop a connection with the institution, thus increasing the likelihood of persistence (King 1993, Mc Author 2005). However, if advisers are providing services that do not meet the students' needs and preferences for advising style, the likelihood of persistence decreases. There is a misconception that advising needs and preferences for advising styles are similar for all students (Crocket and Crawford 1989). The existence of different advising types and organisational models show that all students are not the same and therefore, should have different advising and preferences.

The cohort advisers are to motivate and encourage their students to take their studies seriously. They have to devote adequate time to reading of their books, attend lectures, write and submit their assignments promptly. It is believed that students' academic success is influenced primarily by their cognitive abilities which can be achieved through hard work and students intellectual potentials (Evans 2003).

In order to succeed and fair well academically and socially, students must develop diverse skills such as goal setting, self monitoring, time management and self-evaluation apart from other roles played by their cohort advisers. Assignments must be transformed into personal goals, allocate reasonable time to reading. Students must monitor themselves through various measures like note taking, storing and retrieving information, asking questions where they seem to be confused, reading and writing tests (Mctvey 1976).

Several theories have been formulated to explain group relationship among individuals in an organisation. According to Godstein (1980), the propinquity theory states that the formulation of group relationship is an outcome of the spatial closeness in which people find themselves in the course of normal daily living or working. For example students offering the same course in the University can form the same group, relating together, under the tutelage of an adviser. Also the emotional affiliation theory states that individuals are attracted to join group because such groups provide them with sources of information needed to be empowered academically, vocationally, psychological or otherwise and give the feedback about the appropriateness of their emotions especially when the youths are highly stressed or understressed (Schachter, 1989). A good example is a group of cohorts. Godstein (1980) concludes that affiliating with such groups would reduce the individual's anxiety that the individual student experienced when alone, thus giving them emotional satisfaction. Each student can be helped so as to actualize his potentials and be useful to himself, his family and the society. The Social Comparison Theory was formulated by Fertinger (1984), and modified by Suls and Miller (1997) states that individuals are motivated to join group because the group provides the forum where the individual can evaluate their behavior, opinion and abilities cum activities to be in line with other members of the group. This theory can be used to empower students to achieve academic excellence in the school system, through proper coordinated cohorting exercise.

Moreover, the social exchange theory propounded by Thibant and Kelly (1989) states that people will be motivated to join and remain in a group as long as the group satisfy their social, psychological and material needs. They

further state that individuals will opt out of a group, if the cost of participating in it exceeds the rewards they derive from it. This theory suggests why some students put up unwholesome attitude towards their advisers and the entire cohorting exercise. The psycho-analytic theory of Blos (1982) states that the changing psychological drives which result from self-love or emotional conflict at sexual stage of human development precipitate youth to groups. This theory can be a corrective measure in correcting some of the anti-social behaviours exhibited by the members of a cohort, for example, laziness, drug addicts, cultism, delinquency etc..

All the above theories revealed that group of people come together for a common purpose or activity. It is pertinent that the ways people in the group perceive things will be different from each other. Perception is a psychological function which through the sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, mouth and skin) enables the individual to receive and process information on the state of the environment. The way people of different age group perceive things differ from one group to another. For instance, the way adolescents would perceive events or objects differ from how adults would perceive it. Perceptions of events vary among groups or individuals. This of course is applicable to cohorting exercise. Among students, some maintain high perception of cohorting exercise while others have a low perception of it. Willson and Willson in Ohuakanwa (2008) explained that when adolescent students have poor perception of an educational exercise this tend to influence them and their round development.

Attitudes of some students are not encouraging. Some felt it is not necessary having cohort adviser, while some are of the opinion that meeting the cohort adviser is bugging the lecturer and so decided to be on their own and do it by themselves. Hawley (1993) believes that "self management is more important now than it has ever been. The level of students coping in the university depends on how well they adjusted with their academic challenges and school environment (Owumanam & Owumanam 2004)

There are many academic programmes set out by the university authority to assist the students to overcome their school challenges. They include academic

support campus activities, health and wellness programmes, students orientation programmes etc. (NACAD 2004). The programmes do this by connecting students to their cohort advisers, helping them to set and reach goals and making them successful in the classroom. These systems are designed also to identify students who are having difficulty in coping with their academic and behavioural expectations of the university (NACADA 2010) such adjustment problem is identified early enough in the students first semester in order to have some chance for a successful intervention. This is done through providing midterm grade reports early in the semester and having advisers or other staff follow up with all students who fall below a certain cut off point average (Pascarella et al 2004).

Despite all these, some students still leave the university after 4-6 years without graduation. No doubt, some course advisers do not help matters. They are hostile, difficult to approach, always busy, possibly as a result of their excess workload, time factor, personality problem as well as their limited knowledge about the situation at hand concerning the students challenges. More than ever before, cohorting exercise has contributed immensely to many students' frustration, depression, intimidation, helplessness, fear, anxiety, phobia, inferiority complex and poor academic performance. In the recent times, cohorting exercise has not in any way build up in individuals such dispositions as confidence, originality, creativity, self-esteem, commitment and self-efficacy. Instead, it has led to high students' manipulation, exploitation and domination of the highest order. As if that is not enough, some cohort advisers find it difficult to monitor and follow up their students' academic progress until they are sure of students' compensation for an exercise they are duty-bound.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between cohorting exercise and socio-academic performance of students in tertiary institutions.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide this study

- (1) How students and members of staff perceive cohorting exercise.

- (2) To what extent does students' high or low perception of cohorting exercise influence students' socio-academic performance?
- (3) The extent to which cohort exercise influence students' socio-academic performance?
- (4) To what extent does personal dispositions of cohort advisers influence the entire exercise, positively or negatively.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were generated for the study:

- (1) There will no significant difference in perception of students and members of staff about cohorting exercise.
- (2) Students' perception of cohorting exercise will not be significantly different from their socio-academic performance.
- (3) There will be no significant relationship between cohorting exercise and socio-academic performance of students.
- (4) Personal dispositions of cohort advisers will not be significantly correlated with socio-academic performance of students.

Methodology

The study is a descriptive research design that aims at collecting data to describe existing phenomenon about cohorting exercise and socio-academic performance of students. The respondents for this study consists of 100 students and 20 cohort advisers distributed across faculties in the University of Lagos. The students' ages ranged between 19 and 21 with a mean age of 20.01. The lecturers' position ranked from Lecturer 1 to Senior Lecturer. Two sets of questionnaires were used in collecting information from the students and members of staff namely; "Cohorting Exercise and Socio-academic Performance Questionnaire" and "Perception of Students and Members of Staff on Cohorting Exercise". The questionnaires had two sections each. Section One elicited the bio-datas of the respondents while Section Two measured the variables in the study. The data generated were analyzed using t-test statistics for independent samples to test hypotheses 1 & 2 and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to test hypotheses 3 & 4. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The first hypothesis in the null form states that 'there will be no significant difference in the perception of the students and the members of staff about cohorting exercise'. To test this hypothesis the t-test statistical analysis was used. The result is shown in table 1 below:

Table 1: An independent t-test statistical analysis table showing the difference in the perception of students and the members of staff about cohorting exercise.

Group	N	X	SD	t-cal	df	t-critical
Students	100	79.41	17.40	3.42	118	1.98
Staff Members	20	35.31	10.01			

$P < 0.05$; $df=118$; $t_{cal}=3.42$

Result from table 1 shows that there was a significant difference in perception of students and members of staff about cohorting exercise.

The second hypothesis in the null form states that 'students' high or low perception of cohorting exercise will not be significantly different from their socio-academic performance. To test this hypothesis, t-test for independent samples was used and the result is shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: An independent t-test statistical analysis table showing the difference in students' high or low perception of cohorting exercise and socio-academic performance.

Group	N	X	SD	t-cal	df	t-critical
High	63	73.24	16.14	1.31	98	1.98
Low	37	57.11	13.73			

$P < 0.05$; $df=98$; $t_{cal}=1.31$

Result from table 2 shows that students' high or low perception of cohorting exercise is not significantly different from their socio-academic performance. The calculated t-value of 1.31 is less than the critical t-value of 1.98. Hence the null hypothesis was accepted. This means there is no significant difference in students' high or low perception of cohorting exercise and their socio-academic performance.

The third hypothesis states that there will be no significant relationship between cohorting exercise and socio-academic performance of students. To test this hypothesis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Method was used and the result is shown below in Table 3.

Table 3: A Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient showing relationship between cohorting exercise and socio-academic performance of students.

Variables	X	SD	N	r-cal	df	r-critical
Cohorting Exercise	83.11	18.11	100	1.20	98	0.19
Socio-academic Performance	73.01	16.03				

$P < 0.05$; $df=100$; $r_{critical}=0.19$

Result from table 3 shows that there is a positive correlation between cohorting exercise and socio-academic performance of students. The calculated r-value of 1.20 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.19. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. There is a significant relationship between cohorting exercise and socio-academic performance of students.

The fourth hypothesis states that personal dispositions of cohort advisers will not be significantly correlated with socio-academic performance of students. To test this hypothesis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used and the result is shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4: A Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient showing relationship between personal dispositions of cohort advisers and socio-academic performance of students.

Variables	x	SD	N	r-cal	df	r-critical
Personal Disposition of Advisers	84.39	18.11	100	0.57	98	0.19
Socio-Academic Performance of Students	73.01	16.03				

$P < 0.05$; $df=100$; $r_{critical}=0.19$

Result from table 4 shows that is a positive and high relationship between personal dispositions of cohort advisers and socio-academic performance of students. The calculated r-value of 0.57 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.19. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is no significant relationship between personal dispositions of cohort advisers and socio-academic performance of students.

Discussion

The finding of this study shows that there was a significant difference in perception of students and staff members about cohorting exercise. This finding corroborates the position of Willson and Willson in Ohuakanwa (2008) who explained that when adolescent students have poor perception of an educational exercise this tend to influence them and their round development. Perception is a psychological function which through the sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, mouth and skin) enables the individual to receive and process information on the state of the environment. In this case, members of staff are more exposed, learned and no doubt could reason deeply than students. Moreso, most of the students are still in their adolescence period when reasoning is done superficially (Havighurst in Olayinka, 1987).

Also, it was revealed that students' high or low perception in cohorting exercise was not significantly different from their socio-academic performance. Attitudes of some students are not encouraging. Some felt it is not necessary having cohort adviser, while some are of the opinion that meeting the cohort adviser is bugging the lecturer and so decided to be on their own and do it by themselves. Hawley (1993) believes that "self management is more important now than it has ever been. The level of students coping in the university depends on how well they adjusted with their academic challenges and school environment (Owumanam & Owumanam 2004). This finding seems to support the position of Ohuakanwa (2008) that when students have poor perception of their parents' status and their educational exercise it tends to influence them and their round development. Suffice it to say that students' socio-academic performance is a product of their high or low perception of cohorting exercise.

In the same vein, the study revealed that there was a relationship between cohorting exercise and socio-academic performance of students. This corroborates the finding of Omoluabi (1993) that cohorting exercise for group of students helps improve moral behavior, academic performance and progressive activities for self-development. This view is further supported by Olusakin and Ubangha (1996) that individual's psycho-social development can be attributed at least to a series of group interactions and group memberships.

Finally, the result of this study shows that there was a positive and high relationship between personal disposition of cohort advisers and socio-academic performance of students. Hunter and White (2004) stated that cohort advising, well developed and appropriately accessed, is perhaps the only structured campus endeavour that can guarantee students sustained interaction with a caring and concerned adult. When students utilize the advising services that are available to them, they are often able to shape a meaningful learning experience for themselves. If students are not proactive in seeking out their adviser, they will miss the opportunity to create this experience. Students who are in regular contact with their adviser can discuss the challenges and successes they have encountered in their academic and personal lives.

Conclusion

Based on the above finding, it is concluded that:

- (1) Cohorting exercise can make or mar socio-academic performance of students.
- (2) Differences in perception of students and staff members about cohorting exercise are as a result of differences in orientation, age-group, exposure and expectations.
- (3) When students have high perception of cohorting exercise it will help improve their socio-academic performance and the contrary for students with low perception of cohorting exercise.
- (4) Personal dispositions of cohort advisers could make or mar the entire cohorting exercise.

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that:

- (1) Cohort advisers should be adequately compensated by school authority so as to be motivated to do the work judiciously.
- (2) Measures should be put in place to checkmate cohort advisers who are using the avenue to perpetrate evil such as students' exploitation and manipulation.
- (3) There is need for students to be given adequate orientation on assistance cohorting exercise can fetch them.
- (4) Relationship as it exists in cohorting exercise should be that of trust, mutual assistance and not of oppression.

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