



Original Article

International Journal of Educational Research and Technology

P-ISSN 0976-4089; E-ISSN 2277-1557

IJERT: Volume 6 [3] September 2015: 65-69

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ISO 9001: 2008 Certified Organization

Website: www.soeagra.com/ijert.html

Participation in Literary Club Activities and Literature Instruction in a Dynamic and Evolving Society

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ABSTRACT

The complex nature of teaching-learning process in a dynamic and evolving society brings about widespread belief by teachers and stakeholders in education that students no longer benefit much from “chalk and talk” mode of learning. This study delves into using school aimed at examining the extent to which students’ participation in literary club activities could predict students’ achievement in Literature-in-English in a dynamic and evolving society. Five (5) senior secondary public and co-educational schools in Ondo State were selected for the study. Two hundred and fifty (250) Literature-in-English students participated in the study using random sampling technique. The instrument used for the study was Students’ Participation in Literary Club Activities Observation Schedule (SPLCAOS), adapted from (Amokeodo, 2012). Three (3) research questions were raised for the study. Data collected were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) for statistical analysis. Findings from the study revealed a significant positive correlation/relationship between students’ participation in literary club activities and their achievement in Literature-in-English. The study recommended among other things; that professional Literature-in-English teachers and the schools should encourage students’ active participation in literary club activities in order to enhance their academic achievement in Literature-in-English.

Key words: Literary Club Activities, Literature Instruction, Drama Club, Readers’ Club, Literature-in-English and Achievement in Literature.

Received 22.05.2015

Revised 01.07.2015

Accepted 08.08.2015

How to cite this article: Fakeye, D.O , Adebile, Ruth Foluke, Toju Eyengho . Participation in Literary Club Activities and Literature Instruction in a Dynamic and Evolving Society. Inter. J. Edu. Res. Technol. 6[3] 2015; 65-69. DOI: 10.15515/ijert.0976-4089.6.3.6569

INTRODUCTION

Literature is concerned with the literary aspect of communication using language for artistic and creative purposes with the intent of creating beauty which is intellectual (Owoeye, 2009). This implies that literature and language are twin concepts which are strictly tied together in some major ways especially as a means of communication and expression of culture, though with divergent functions in some ways. (Ezenandu, 2011). Literature can be seen as a work of imagination that is inverted from real life experience which is recreated into a work that conveys what might happen, that is, the improbable situation. As such, Literature presents an illusion of reality or truth-likeness and when this illusion of reality is conveniently presented, it stands in recognizable relation to life. (Jegade, 1998). Ogunsiji (2003) in support of this view describes Literature as an art in which imagination has freedom to roam and resilience to nourish feelings.

Participation in literary club activities in this study refers to the level at which students’ participate in school club activities that are relevant to the teaching and learning of Literature in Nigerian senior secondary schools. According to the Nigeria National Curriculum for Senior Secondary Schools, the Literature curriculum contains the aims and objectives of teaching and the development of the sensitivity of the students to various issues and conditions that involves well-rounded holistic education. In this regard, Literature is an art that gives pleasure and knowledge which other disciplines may fail to give. (Roberts, 2008; Boyd, 2005; Cooke, 2005). This study considers the three genres of Literature-in-English

(Prose, Poetry and Drama) as it is contained in the Nigeria National Curriculum for the senior secondary schools.

Olatunji, (2003) describes literary activities as school-based statutory clubs that the societies generally referred to as “co-curricular activities”. He further explains that they are integral parts of the school diversified curriculum content, such as press club, farmers club, cultural group, music group, drama club and literary and debating society among others. Therefore, literary activities are academic organizations that form part of co-curricular activities controlled, co-ordinate and supervised by the teachers and the entire school authorities. They are academic activities that are statutorily in the senior secondary school programmes as part of educational activities in order to aid the over-all development of the child. According to Henry and Akanji (2003) Literary activities help students to have a sense of control over their learning which is absent in informal conventional classroom instruction.

Literature instruction in a dynamic and evolving society in the study refers to the various methods of teaching and learning Literature-in-English in this cyber age; the age of technological advancement. Specifically, Literature instruction refers to the teaching and learning of Literature and students’ achievement in it. The study delves into the use of literary activities to teach and predict students’ achievement in Literature as against the conventional method of “chalk and talk” which is no longer satisfying the fulfillment of the goals and objectives of teaching and learning especially of Literature-in-English. (Ezenandu, 2011). It is a consensus of opinion that there is no specific method of teaching Literature-in-English; it depends on the teacher, the genre of Literature to be studied, available materials and levels and background of the learners. So, one can examine different types of Literature instruction especially this period of technological advancement. (Akinade, 1996). Scholars in Literature-in-English have observed that different pedagogical strategies have failed to enhance students’ achievement in Literature-in-English. (Du Point, 2001; Madu-abuchi, 2008; Ayanniyi, 2009; Ezenandu, 2011) such empirical findings have suggested that for improved teaching and learning of Literature, activity based and discussion strategies should be used in Literature instruction in a dynamic and evolving society. This informs the justification for this study.

Widdowson (2005) opines that there are different instructional methods that are relevant to the teaching of Literature-in-English, but the teacher as a guide should not just provide pre-digested information and ready made opinion to be mechanically regurgitated but carefully designed; “prompt” questions, instructions and suggestions to help both teachers and students in the classroom activities. However, these are conventional pedagogical approaches which are no longer meeting the needs of today’s Literature-in-English learners, as the society has shifted from industrial to technological age, filled with several devices that involves students’ activities while teachers stands as guide to such activities. It is in support of activity-based Literature instruction that Bamisaye (2000) stated that;

... a most valuable approach in teaching Literature-in-English for social transformation and students’ improved achievement is the stimulation of students’ creative thinking through literary activities... while teaching of factual or predictive social events in literary works and stimulations of critical thinking are valuable pedagogical approaches in Literature, they should be followed by appropriate evaluation strategies in order to consolidate the epistemological gains of pedagogy.

However, this study purposively selected two major literary club activities in the senior secondary school programmes. These literary activities are selected because they are found most relevant to the teaching and learning of Literature-in-English among all others. Also, the selected literary activities involves students’ active participation and involvement in the classroom activities. It is believed that this informal approach to the teaching of Literature-in-English would improve students’ attitudes toward learning Literature-in-English and also enhance their achievement. (Fakeye & Adebile, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

The problem of poor performance of senior secondary school students in Literature-in-English in West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and other public examinations has been a source of concern of parents, teachers, governments and other stakeholders. Besides researchers in Literature-in-English observed that the subject is not having the positive effects it is designed for: as a source of helping the individual to inculcate the proper norms and values of the society. Several efforts by researchers to provide solutions to this problem have been concentrated on providing effective instructional strategies, yet all these have not been able to solve the problem to a significant level. This might be due to the fact that previous studies have excluded a vital variable such as students’

participation in literary club activities (SPLCD) that are related to the teaching and learning of Literature-in-English at schools. Hence, this study investigated the extent to which students' participation in Literary club activities (SPLCA) would predict and enhance students' achievement in Literature-in-English.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does students' participation in literary club activities predict and enhance students' achievement in Literature-in-English.
2. What is the relative contribution of students participation in:
 - a. Drama club activities
 - b. Reader's club activities
 to students' achievement in Literature-in-English
3. What is the joint contribution of students' participation in drama club activities and readers' club activities to students' achievement in Literature-in-English.

Scope of the Study

The study is delimited to senior secondary school II in Ondo State. Five secondary public and co-educational schools were purposively selected from the three senatorial districts in Ondo State. The researcher purposively selected schools that operate literary club activities that concerns the study; drama club and readers' club. These two literary club activities were selected because of their relevance to the teaching and learning of Literature-in-English.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study employs descriptive research design of a survey type because the researcher has no control over the independent variables of students' participation in drama club activities and readers' club activities; as their manifestation already existed. The independent variables are designed to examine if their manifestation would have significant relationship with Literature-in-English instruction and students achievement in Literature-in-English.

Population

The population for this study consists of all Literature-in-English students in senior secondary schools, SS II in Ondo State consisting of three senatorial districts.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Five senior secondary public and co-educational schools were purposively selected from Ondo State consisting of three senatorial districts. Research participants from each school were all members of the literary clubs selected for the study. Intact class techniques involving all Literature students in the various purposively selected schools were used.

Instruments

The main instrument used for the study was Students' Participation in Literary Club Activities Observation Schedule (SPLCAOS). This was used to measure the level of students' participation in literary club activities through observation, rating scale and scoring according to the degree of students' participation in different literary clubs. The rating scale was adapted from (Amokeodo, 2012). It contain 25 statements showing different degrees and levels of students' participation in literary club activities. The rating scale ranges from 4 – 1 with the items as frequently (4), occasionally (3), Rarely (2) and Never (1).

METHODOLOGY

The scoring was done through observation while the literary activities were in operation. Trained and qualified research assistants participated in the rating activities. Three research assistants participated in the rating exercise per group simultaneously. The mean score of the raters were used for final analysis. Data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA). These tools were used to examine the extent to which participation in literary club activities would predict effective Literature instruction and students achievement in Literature-in-English.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: To what extent does students participation in Literary Club Activities (LCA) predicts and enhance students' achievement in Literature-in-English.

The analysis is as shown in Table 1

Table 1: Analysis of relationship between literary club activities and students' achievement in literature.

Variables	N	$\Sigma X, \Sigma Y$	$\Sigma X^2, \Sigma Y^2$	ΣXY	DF	r-cal	r ²	r-critical
LCA	250	12952	1084749	1084770	248	0.88*	0.77	
Achievement	250	13005	1203344					

* = Significant at $P \leq 0.05$ alpha level.

The analysis in Table 1 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.88 is greater than the critical r-value. This implies that there is a positive significant relationship between students participation in literary club activities and their achievement in Literature. Table 1 also shows that, the value of r² is 0.77. This implies that, 77% of the variation of students' achievement in Literature is attributed to the influence of students' participation in literary club activities. This is in line with Olatunji, (2003) opinion that school-based literary activities when connected with the teaching of Literature-in-English is a most effective ways of consolidating students' linguistic skills and correct pattern of text analysis in Literature-in-English. According to Olatunji (2003) students' participation in literary club activities would enhance students' level of performance in Literature-in-English.

Research Question 2: What is the relative contribution of students' participation in:

- (a) Drama Club Activities
 - (b) Reader's Club Activities
- to students' achievement in Literature

The analysis is as shown in Table 2

Table 2: Relative contributions of students' participation in literary club activities to students' achievement in Literature.

Factors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	Beta β	Std Error	Beta β	Std Error		
(Constant)	31.02	4.55			5.43	.000*
Drama Club Activities	.21	.07	.08		2.99	.003*
Reader's Club Activities	-.16	.04	-.12		-4.63	.000*

* = Significant at $P \leq 0.05$ alpha level.

Table 2 shows that the relative contribution of drama club activities ($\beta = .08$; $t = 2.99$; $P < .05$) is weak with positive significant relationship between students' participation in drama club activities and their achievement in Literature. The table also shows that the relative contribution of reader's club activities ($\beta = -.12$; $t = -4.63$; $P < .05$) is weak with negative significant relationship between students participation in reader's club activities and their achievement in Literature. This implies that the two factors (drama club activities and reader's club activities) could predict students' achievement in Literature. The result of this study can be use to buttress the (Morianana, 2005) assertion that literary activities supplement and extend the contacts and experiences found in more formal part of the programme as club activities may have positive effect life skills such as reading and communication skills. Student participation in drama club and readers club have a joint relationship to student achievement in literature.

Research Question 3: What is the joint contribution of students' participation in drama club activities and readers club activities to students' achievement in Literature-in-English.

The analysis is as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of regression analysis of students' participation in literary club activities.

Model	R. Square	Adjusted R. Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.766	.586	0.343	11.752

Table 3 shows that students' participation in drama and reader's club activities have joint relationship with students' achievement in Literature. The adjusted R. Square value of 0.343 implies that, 34.3% of the total variance in the students' achievement in Literature is attributed to joint influence of students' participation in drama and reader's club activities. Carl (1996) describes the elements that make participation in literary activities conducive, functional and worthwhile; and concludes that they facilitate students' concentration and involvement in the Literature-in-English classroom which in turn enhance both the effective teaching and learning of Literature-in-English and students' learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated students' participation in literary club activities and Literature-in-English instruction in a dynamic and evolving society. It was found that students' participation in literary club activities have significant joint effect on students achievement in Literature-in-English. The study also revealed that both drama reader's club activities in senior secondary schools have joint relationship with

students' achievement in Literature-in-English. Therefore, the correlation/relationship analysis between students' participation in literary club activities (drama and readers' clubs) were found to be positively significant.

RECOMMENDATION

It was therefore recommended that:

- Senior secondary schools in Nigeria should engage in functional school-based club activities that are relevant to the teaching of Literature-in-English;
- Literary activities should be directed towards instructional and teaching content in the Literature-in-English curriculum;
- Literary activities should involve defined rules and regulations for supported actions such as record keeping value oriented and overall participation and engagement of all Literature-in-English students;
- The values of engagement, collaboration, understanding of the activities in the literary clubs should be kept by teachers and the students alike;
- School-based literary activities should be purposeful so that learners can grasp, understand and retain the content of the lesson/activities;
- The governments should provide adequate facilities for functional and effective practice of school-based literary activities.

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