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**COMPARATIVE STUDY OF COMMERCIAL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KANO AND JIGAWA STATES, NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*This study investigated commercial students' academic performance in public examinations in Secondary Schools in Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive design with a population of all the 280 secondary schools in Kano State and the 170 secondary schools in Jigawa State, Nigeria. Out of this population, a sample of 140 secondary schools in Kano State and 85 secondary schools in Jigawa State was taken. The method of selection was by stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used to collect data for the study was an inventory while the data collected was analysed using percentages, chi-square statistic and the t-test. It was revealed that the performance of student in the Senior Secondary Certificate (SSCE) Examinations was low. Based on this, it was recommended that the educational system needs to be overhauled and made result oriented in the two States. The teaching and learning processes in all schools in the two States should be re-examined with the aim of improving the quality of performance of students in SSCE examinations.*

**Keywords:** *Academic performance; public examinations; SSCE; Comparative Study; Commercial Students*

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**Introduction**

Academic performance has been defined as the academic standing of a student at any given moment. This academic standing could be explained in terms of the grades obtained in a course or groups of courses. This academic standing could be argued that performance is a measure of output and that the main outputs in education are expressed in terms of learning, that is, changes in knowledge, skills

and attitudes of individuals as a result of their experiences within the school's system.

Noting this point, student's performance in an examination as being depended on his cumulative grade point average. A student's success is generally judged by examination performance while the best criterion of performance is the sum of the student's academic performance in all the subjects taken.

Researchers had deliberated much on performance as a measure of school output (Bandeke, 2001). Argued that the only measure of performance of school leavers is the attainment in GCE examinations. Consequently, they measured output in terms of the number of school leavers weighted by different indices of quality or number of passes and reported that performance in GCE is one relevant criterion of educational quality and that 'academic index' measures output in terms of GCE results.

The pattern of grading students in the Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC) and the Senior Secondary Certificate (SSC) examinations in Nigeria is such that the distinction grade is being represented by A1 to B3. The credit grade is represented by C4 to C6. The ordinary pass grade is represented by D7 and E8 while the failure grade is represented by F9 (WAEC, 2006). It needs to be mentioned however, that the distinction and credit grades are the only requisite grades for admissions into Nigerian universities and candidates must have at least credits in five subjects including English Language in order to qualify for admission (JAMB, 2007).

Considering the results in the GCE and similar examinations, a fall in performance in public examinations has been reported in many countries (World Bank, 1988; Adeyegbe, 2012; Onipede, 2003). The World Bank (1988), for instance, found that the quality of education especially in Sub-Sahara Africa has eroded markedly while State support has declined. In Nigeria, Adeyegbe (2012) found that there was a decline in students' performance in SSC examinations. He reported that in topics where teachers found difficult to teach, students tend to perform below expectation. Supporting this point, Onipede (2003) reported that students performed below expectation in Senior Secondary Certificate examinations (SSCE) in many subject areas especially in English Language and Mathematics. Researchers have identified different factors that could cause students' failure. Academic failure seems to be associated with the lack of personal confidence, emotional instability and temperamental tendency towards extraversion. Supporting this fact, Failure in students is due to the lack of confidence in the knowledge they possess which in turn could affect their level of activity in the classroom. They argued that students' academic problems arise from personal

inadequacies such as low ability; negative self-concept, anxiety, maladjustment, environmental influences such as poor classroom conditions, curricular inadequacies, peer groups and the lack of home support. These arguments supported OECD's (1989) remarks that many young people do not learn much in developing countries. Some often leave school before the school leaving age while others are in the habit of attending school irregularly.

Other reasons as to why most candidates find it difficult to pass their examinations. Among these reasons include having to repeat classes, lack of adequate knowledge in their various subjects, inadequacy of professionally qualified teachers in schools and insufficient facilities. These reasons might perhaps have led to the remarks made by (Dahiru, 2001; Adelugba, 2013; Asla, 2003) that Jigawa State recorded an unprecedented failure in core subjects in the year 2002 senior secondary certificate examinations in the annals of the State.

Therefore, since performance is a measure of school output why the Senior Secondary Certificate (SSC) examinations is the major public examinations exposed to by secondary school students in Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria, this study intended to examine the performance level of students in commercial subjects in the examinations in the two States.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The performance of secondary schools' students in Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria has been a subject of controversy. Some schools of thought were of the view that the performance was improving. Other schools of thought argued that the performance level was dwindling terribly (Sani, 2003). The problem of this study, therefore, was to determine whether or not any significance differences exist between the performance level of secondary schools' students in senior secondary certificate examination in Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria? In addressing this problem, the following research questions were raised:

1. What is the performance level of students in commercial subjects in Kano and Jigawa States, in the Senior Secondary Certificate examinations (SSCE)?
2. Is there any significant difference in the performance of students in commercial subjects in Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (SSCE) between Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria?

### **Methodology**

This study was designed along the line of an ex-post facto and a descriptive survey. It was ex-post facto in the sense that it was an after fact or after event

research (Garba, 2006). It was a descriptive survey in the sense that the study examined a particular situation as it was, that is, the academic performance of students in examinations over a large area without any attempt to manipulate variables Cressey (1982). The study was conducted in 2019 in Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria. The study population comprised all the 280 secondary schools in Kano State, Nigeria and the 170 secondary schools in Jigawa State, Nigeria. Out of this population, a sample of 140 secondary schools in Kano State and 85 secondary schools in Jigawa State was taken. The method of selection was by stratified random sampling technique taking into consideration the location of the school on the basis of urban and rural location. The sample accounted for 50% of the study population in each of the two States. Out of the 20,242 students who registered for the Senior Secondary Certificate examinations, (SSCE) in 2018 in Kano State, Nigeria, 10, 121 students who obtained credit and above, that is, grades A1; B2; B3; C4; C5 and C6 in the examinations were selected for the study. In Jigawa State, Nigeria, out of the 11,634 students who registered for the Senior Secondary Certificate examinations (SSCE) in 2018, 6,317 students who obtained credit and above, that is, grades A1; B2; B3; C4; C5 and C6 in the examinations were selected for the study. The method of selection was by purposive and stratified random sampling techniques.

The instrument used to collect data for the study was an inventory titled Commercial subjects Performance Inventory (CSPI). The inventory requested among other things, data on enrolment figures, sex of school, type of school, number of classes, number of teachers and grades obtained by students in Commerce, Financial Accounts, and Economics in SSC examinations for the years 2015 to 2018 in Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria. These subjects are commercial subjects in the Nigerian secondary schools' curriculum (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). The data collected were analyzed with the use of percentages, Chi-Square test and the t-test.

## **Results**

### **Research Question One: What is the performance level of students in commercial subjects in Kano and Jigawa States, in the Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (SSCE)?**

In answering this research question, the grades obtained by students in the Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (SSCE) in Commerce financial accounts and Economics in Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria from 2015 to 2018 were collected from the principals of each of the schools using the inventory. The

performance levels of students in the examination in the two States are presented in Table 1 and 2.

**Table 1: Performance level of Commercial students in SSCE in Kano State, Nigeria 2015-2018**

	<i>Commerce</i>	<i>Fin. Accts</i>	<i>Economics</i>
<i>Years</i>	(%)	(%)	(%)
2015	46.2	41.2	48.7
2016	49.4	48.5	49.2
2017	47.3	52.4	48.9
2018	48.5	44.7	52.3

*Field Study, 2018*

**Table 2: Performance level of Commercial students in SSCE in Jigawa state, Nigeria 2015-2018**

	Commerce	Fin. Accts	Economics
<i>Years</i>	(%)	(%)	(%)
2015	47.3	39.6	48.7
2016	49.1	49.5	52.2
2017	48.2	47.3	49.5
2018	49.6	44.3	49.7

**Field Study, 2018**

In Table 1 and 2, the performance levels of students in the three commercial subjects in the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) in both states were low and almost at the same level in each of the three subjects. There was no year where the performance level reached 55% in any subject.

**Research Question Two: Is there any significant difference in the performance of students in commercial subjects in Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (SSCE) between Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria?**

In addressing this problem, the question was transformed to the following null hypothesis:

**1: There is no significant difference in the performance of students in commercial subjects in Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (SSCE) between Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria?**

Data collected from the principals of schools using the inventory. The chi square statistic.

As indicated in Table 5, the calculated chi-square value (89.81) was greater than the table chi-square value (2.148) at 0.05 level of significance; hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This shows that there was a significant relationship between school location and students' academic performance in the Senior Secondary Certificate (JSC) examination in Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria.

To further ascertain the difference in the performance of commercial students in senior secondary school examination in Kano and Jigawa states t-test statistic was used at a significance level of 0.05 as shown in table 4;

**Table 4; Performance of Commercial Students in 2015-2018 at Credit grade SSC Examination in Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria**

States	N	Mean	Sd	t-cal	t-crit
Kano	140	1.17	1.21	1.45	1.96
Jigawa	85	1.36	0.91		

Field Study, 2018

As indicated in Table 4, the t-calculated (1.45) was less than the t-table (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null Hypothesis was accepted. This shows that there was no significant difference in the academic performance of students in senior Secondary Certificate SSC examinations in Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria.

### Discussions

The foregoing analysis had shown the performance level of commercial students in the Senior Secondary Certificate (SSC) examinations in Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria. The findings revealed that the performance of commercial students in Senior Secondary Certificate (SSC) examinations was low.

The finding was in consonance with the findings made in earlier studies (Dahiru, 2001; Abdullahi, 2013; Aliyu, 2013). For example Aliyu, 2013 asserted that there was no significant difference between the performance of students in Ondo State and the performance in Ekiti State, Nigeria in the JSC examinations. However, in the SSC examinations, students of Ondo State outperformed students of Ekiti State. Although, the performance level of students in the examinations was low

in both States, the performance in the JSC examinations was better than performance at the SSC examinations.

The low level performance of commercial students in the examinations in the two States might perhaps be attributed to what Omotoso (2012) described as poor staffing in schools, truancy, laziness on the account of many students; poor preparation of work in respect of many teachers; societal wrong values and general indiscipline. All these problems lent credence to the question 'which way education in Nigeria?' which Olabisi (1992) considered as a historical one that best summarizes the path that the Nigerian Educational system is treading. The low level performance of commercial students in the examinations found in this study agreed with the findings of other researchers (Oke, 1992 ; Adeyemi, 2007; Onipede, 2003). Onipede (2003) for example gave other reasons for this low level performance of students in public examinations. He argued that adolescents experience other problems, which affect their studies. These include having to repeat classes and the lack of adequate knowledge in particular subjects especially English Language, Mathematics and the Sciences. He then reported that the problem of failure has contributed a lot to the moral decadence of adolescents.

The low performance level found in the two States agreed with the findings made in previous studies (Adeyemo, 2001; Adeyegbe, 2012; Adeyemi, 2007). Adeyegbe (2012) for instance, observed a decline in students' performance in SSC examinations in other States of the country and attributed this to the inadequacy of facilities in schools.

This suggests that little or no improvement has occurred in the performance level of students in the two States over the year. The low level performance of students in the examinations further implies that the inspection of schools by the Ministries of Education in the two States might not have been adequate and effective as expected.

This suggests that the objectives of secondary education in the, FRN (2004) which among other things, included the preparation of the students for higher education as not been fully achieved in the two States.

## **Conclusion**

Considering the findings of this study, it was concluded that the performance level of students in the SSC examinations in Kano and Jigawa States, Nigeria was low. The implication of this is that many students from the two States might not be qualified for admission into higher instructions in the country.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, it was recommended that the educational system in the two States needs to be revamped and made result oriented. In doing this, the teaching and learning processes in all schools in the two States need to be re-examined with the aim of improving the quality of performance of students in public examinations. The Ministries of Education in the two States should also intensify more efforts in conducting regular short visit and routine inspection to schools in a bid to monitor the performance of students in their various examinations.

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