



ACADEMIC INFLUENCE OF EXTRA-MURAL LESSONS ON PRIMARY SCHOOLS PUPILS

**BEATRICE CHINONSO MADUAGWU¹, EMMANUEL N.
BABARIJIGA¹ AND VICTOR NDUBUISI ORDUA²**

*¹Department of Education, Faculty of Education, University of Maiduguri,
Borno State, Nigeria. ²Department of Educational Psychology, G&C, School of
Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Onelga, Rivers
State, Nigeria*

Abstract

This study investigated the academic influence of extra-mural lessons on primary schools pupils. Five objectives guided this study. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. With a population of 5100 pupils, simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample for this study. Four hundred and seventy pupils (males = 246, females = 224) within primary 4 and 5 from ten private primary schools within Maiduguri Metropolis were employed for data collection. Questionnaire designed by the researchers was utilized to obtain information on academic influence of extramural lessons on pupils. Findings from the study established that extramural lessons are not compulsory in some private schools and many pupils prefer extramural lessons to be conducted immediately after school hours when compared to other times. Also, high academic influence of extramural lessons on pupils was established while gender did not have any impact on this influence on pupils. However, it was recommended that the Nigerian government, through the Ministry of Education, should probe into the excesses of some private schools in order to check them.

Keywords: *Extramural Lessons, Learning, Academic Influence, Pupils, Education,*

Introduction

Academic excellence is the crux of learning in education. Therefore, it is vital that pupils absorb, process and retain knowledge during learning. Cognitive influences, as well as prior experience are vital in how understanding is acquired

and how knowledge and skills are retained (Torres & Ash, 2007). This is probably the reason for the influx of extramural lessons into the education system in Nigeria which has gradually grown alongside the mainstream education. Extramural is any activity conducted outside of the normal course of study or outside of the school setting. However, extramural lessons are academic activities which take place immediately after school hours or on weekend while some are organized during holidays.

Extramural lessons could be in form of after school hours classes, private home classes, outside school lessons or even break time lessons which are arranged by the parents or guardians of pupils with the teachers (Modish Project, 2019). Ezedinugu (2018) maintained that these lessons are organized by teachers in both public and private schools officially within their school premises, or by unemployed trained and untrained teachers outside school. Parents enroll their children into extramural lessons to aid them acquire knowledge that they may not have obtained during their hours in school in order to improve their abilities. Extramural lessons serve as platform for pupils to experience hands-on practice opportunities and capture their interest by activating prior knowledge. Extramural lessons also help pupils understand difficult topics via repeated practice in order to gain mastery of them. Mastery of learning gives the learner a feeling of accomplishment which, in turn, boosts confidence ability. Extramural classes should aid permanent learning on pupils and consequently, improve their academic performance. It is expected that pupils who participate in extramural lessons should be well engaged, make good use of their extra time and perform excellently. Graesser (2011) posited that the ideal vision of learning is that it be broad, deep, fast, precise and practically relevant. However, these virtues set a high bar that is rarely reached in current educational settings, extramural lessons inclusive.

The performance index of pupils who enroll in extramural lessons is of concern to the researchers. As Ezedinugu (2018) observed that some teachers in private schools shun their normal teaching duties during school hours only to teach the same topics during official extramural classes imposed on the students at additional costs. Also, some teachers find it difficult to cover the syllabus before the end of each academic session. Extramural lessons then serve as good opportunity to cover up the gaps. This simply means that any pupil who fails to

partake in such extramural classes would lose the benefits of formal instructions on the topics concerned. In most cases, these official extramural classes in schools are organized to provide opportunities to enhance the teachers' remuneration with little or no improvement in the academic standard of the students (Ezedinugu, 2018).

The researchers have also been observed children who participate in extramural lessons come home tired and worn out with loads of assignments or home works that they must submit the next day. Sometimes, these assignments cannot be independently written by them but with parental guide. Extramural lessons in Nigeria seem to negate the Goldilocks principle which emphasizes that assignments should not be too hard or too easy, but at the right level of difficulty for each student's skill and prior knowledge. According to Graesser (2011), pupils should have manageable cognitive load as learning materials should not overload their working memory. This might induce pupils to learn without understanding. Extramural lesson should not be at the detriment of pupils it intends to help. Studying in general can never be considered as being bad, but excessive studying could produce the opposite of the intended result.

Pressure to succeed in school education is intense and appears to be increasing as society becomes more competitive (Dunne et al., 2010). Although competitive stress can be a positive stimulus for achievement, when stress is severe and prolonged, it can have major impact on health and well-being. Children at this stage of development still learn through play. Variety of unstructured free play help balance formal lessons at school. Children who engage in extramural lessons seem not have adequate time for play and even, rest. Some pupils complain that they often forget to eat and do not get adequate sleep. These might make these pupils vulnerable to academic pressure.

When pupils are academically pressured, they are burdened by the demands of time and energy to achieve specific academic goals. This stress can come from a variety of potential sources and have a myriad of impacts on pupils both emotionally and academically (Durette, 2020). Moderate academic pressure can be a positive force, causing pupils to want to perform well while excessive academic pressure could be a negative force, resulting in pupils having anxiety while studying, concentration problems or test anxiety. Dunne et al. (2010) posited that the negative effects of academic pressure encompass depression,

anxiety, behavioural problems and youth suicide. Children need the chance to unwind after the routines and rules of school. Developing healthy lifestyle habits such as getting enough sleep, good nutrition and in this case, adequate playtime can help pupils handle maintain academic balance, improve their concentration, memory and lower stress. When stress is high, learning might not take place. Pupils could experience loss of interest in learning.

As children interact with the world around them, they continually add new knowledge, build upon existing knowledge, and adapt previously held ideas to accommodate new information (McLeod, 2009). Extramural lessons should give learners the opportunity to develop proficiency on a topic or subject. It should complement what is taught during school time. It is against this background that the study examined the academic influence of extramural lessons on primary school pupils in Maiduguri Metropolis with focus on extramural lessons conducted immediately after school hours which are common practices especially in private schools in Nigeria. This study also sought to confirm or refute the assertion that extramural lessons are compulsory in schools. Pupils' opinion on when and how they prefer extramural lessons to take place were also source of concern to the researchers. Importantly, the present study is unique as internet search revealed dearth of empirical studies conducted on this important aspect of education. Hence, this study aimed at filling this gap in education.

Objectives of the Study

The present study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. to ascertain if extramural lessons are compulsory in schools.
2. to determine how many times a week pupils attend extramural lessons.
3. to establish when pupils prefer extramural lessons to take place.
4. to determine the academic influence of extramural lessons on pupils.
5. to establish the gender difference in the academic influence of extramural lessons on pupils.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the course of this study:

1. Are extramural lessons compulsory in primary schools?
2. How many times a week do pupils attend extramural lessons?

3. When do pupils prefer extramural lessons to take place?
4. What is the academic influence of extramural lesson after school hours on pupils?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 significant level:

H₀₁ There is no significant gender difference in the academic influence of extramural lessons on pupils.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted in the study. From the population of 5100 pupils, sample of 500 pupils was selected from ten private primary schools within Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria. However, only responses from 470 pupils (males = 246, females = 224, mean age of 10.71) were used for analysis as 30 pupils failed to properly fill the questionnaire which rendered them invalid. Only pupils within classes four and five were selected for the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample for this study. Questionnaire designed by the researchers was utilized as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was employed to obtain information on academic influence of extramural lessons on pupils. The pupils indicated their responses on a 4-point Likert scale. With 40 as the maximum score and 10 the minimum score, the higher the score, the more reflective it is of the academic influence of extramural lesson on pupils. To establish the reliability of the research instrument, a pilot test was conducted using test-retest method. Using Pearson's Product moment correlation, the instrument had reliability coefficient of 0.89. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation frequency and percentages) were used to answer the research questions and independent t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: Are extramural lessons compulsory in schools?

Table 1

Descriptive Analysis of Responses on how Compulsory Extramural Lessons are in Schools

Extramural Lessons Percentage	Frequency	
Compulsory	181	38.5
Optional	289	61.5
Total	470	100.0

Data presented in Table 1 shows that 289 respondents reported that extramural lessons are not compulsory in their schools. However, 181 respondents indicated that extramural lessons are compulsory in their schools.

Research Question Two: How many times a week do pupils attend extramural lessons?

Table 2

Descriptive Analysis of Responses on the Number of Times Pupils Attend Extramural Lessons in a Week

No of Times per Week	Frequency	Percentage
Twice	18	3.8
Thrice	248	52.8
Four	158	33.6
Five	46	9.8
Total	470	100.0

Table 2 reveals that majority of pupils (248) reported that they attend extramural lessons three times a week while 33.6% of the pupils indicated that they attend extramural lessons four times a week.

Research Question Three: When do pupils prefer extramural lessons to take place?

Table 3

Descriptive Analysis of Responses on when Pupils Prefer Extramural Lessons to Take Place

Time	Frequency	Percentage
Weekend in the morning	50	10.6
Immediately after school hours	346	73.6

Evening on school days	42	8.9
Weekends in the evening	32	6.8
Total	470	100.0

Data from Table 3 demonstrates that 73.6% of the pupils prefer extramural lessons to occur immediately after school hours; though few pupils indicated that they prefer extramural lessons to take place on weekend in the morning (N=50) and school days in the evening (N=42).

Research Question Four: What is the academic influence lesson of extramural lesson after school hours on pupils?

Table 4

Descriptive Analysis of Responses on Academic Influence of Extramural Lessons on Pupils

Academic influence	Score	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std. Dev
Very Low	0-10	0	0		
Moderately Low	11-20	18	3.8		
Moderately High	21-30	327	69.6	29.20	3.620
Very High	31-40	125	26.6		
Total		470	100.0		

Table 4 shows that the mean score for respondents was 29.20 on 40 point scale. Results further revealed that out of 470 respondents, 327(69.6%) indicated that there was a moderately high academic influence of extramural lessons on pupils, 125(26.6%) indicated very high academic influence while 18(3.8%) respondents reported low academic influence. This implies that there was high academic influence of extramural lessons on pupils.

Ho₁ There is no significant gender difference in the academic influence of extramural lessons on pupils.

Table 5

Gender Difference in the Academic Influence of Extramural Lessons On Pupils

Group	Frequency	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Male	246	29.02	3.759			
					468	-
Female	224	29.39	3.460			

Result in Table 5 reveals that there is no significant gender difference ($p > 0.05$) in the academic influence of extramural lessons. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant gender difference in academic influence of extramural lessons is not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The study examined the academic influence of extramural lessons on pupils in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State. Findings from the study revealed that majority of respondents reported that extramural lessons were not compulsory in their schools. However, some pupils reported that extramural lessons were not optional to them in their school. It is important to note that not all pupils need extramural lessons as some pupils are quick to learn as such, may not need any complementary teaching. Also, some pupils might have underlying health problems, hence extramural lessons should be made optional to accommodate these pupils.

Result further established that greater number of pupils attend extramural lessons three times a week closely followed by pupils who indicated that they attend extramural lessons four times a week. This is acceptable because children at the primary school level need good rest and also need to engage in recreation along aside their academic activities. This would enhance their brain functions and ensure proper development especially, cognitively.

Also, from the study, large number of the pupils indicated that they prefer extramural lessons to take place immediately after school hours as against weekends and evening on school days. This could be to enable them have ample time to play as they probably would not want academics to infringe on their leisure time within the weekends. Since the child today is saddled with so much take-home work from school, weekends would then serve as the only time to complete these homeworks.

The findings of this study further indicated that extramural lessons had high academic influence on pupils. This implies that extramural lessons help pupils progress academically. This also shows that the aim of extramural lessons is achieved. This is not in line with the assertion by Ezedinugu (2018) which claims that extramural lessons provide opportunities to enhance the teachers' remuneration with little or no improvement in the academic standard of the students. However, caution must be taken as the result of the study reflects the opinions of the pupils. Further studies should be conducted to determine the difference in academic performance of pupils who attend lessons and those who do not.

Also, the study revealed no significant gender difference in the academic influence of extramural lessons on pupils. It implies that gender had no impact on the academic role extramural lessons play on pupils.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were based on the findings of the study;

- ✓ Extramural lessons should not be made compulsory in schools as not all pupils essentially need it.
- ✓ The study revealed that pupils prefer extramural lessons to take place immediately after school hours. However, extramural lessons immediately after school hours can be extremely stressful, hence parents and teachers should give children ample opportunity to play and rest as this will help boost their brain function and ensure proper cognitive development.
- ✓ Parents and teachers must ensure that children who are academically deficient should be availed the opportunity to improve through proper guidance during extramural lessons.
- ✓ Though findings from the study established high academic influence of extramural lesson on pupils, there is need for government through the Ministry of Education to probe into the excesses of some private schools in order to check them.

Conclusion

Based on findings, this study concluded that extramural lessons are not compulsory in some private schools; many pupils prefer extramural lessons

conducted immediately after school hours. Furthermore, the level of academic influence of extramural lessons on pupils was high; this means that extramural lessons have positive impact on pupils' performance. However, gender did not have any impact on the academic influence of extramural lessons after school hours on pupils.

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