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Impacts of Learners' Characteristics on Social Studies Students' Academic Performance in Upper Basic Secondary Schools in Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of learners' characteristics on Social Studies students' academic performance in Upper Basic secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. The study was guided by three research questions and three null hypotheses. The study adopted the quasi-experimental research design. The population of the study was fifty-four thousand, two hundred and five Social Studies students from Delta State. The sample size for the study was eight hundred and fifty (850) participants. The instrument for data collection was the Social Studies Achievement Test (SSAT). Data generated were analyzed using the mean and standard deviation for the stated research questions, while the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the formulated null hypotheses at an alpha of 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that; there is no significant effect of location on learners' characteristics on their pretest posttest mean scores and academic performance of students of Upper Basic Social Studies in Delta State; there is no significant effect of sex on learners' characteristics on their pretest posttest mean scores and academic performance of students of Upper Basic Social Studies in Delta State; and there is no significant effect of age on learners' characteristics on their pretest posttest mean scores and academic performance of students of Upper Basic Social Studies in Delta State. The study concluded and made appropriate recommendations.

Keywords

Learners Characteristics, Social Studies, Students, Academic Performance.



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Introduction

Social Studies at the Upper Basic level is a programme in the Nigerian school system. This programme is unique because it provides opportunities for achieving the general objectives of Social Studies Education which is aimed at grooming the young ones to imbibe citizenship and leadership qualities. The imperative for introducing Social Studies Education for the young is contained in the study by Ahmed (2013). According to him, Social Studies Education is taught in schools because it enables teachers to instill in students the knowledge, skills, attributes and actions that are considered important for healthy relationship and valued interaction in diverse context. In order to achieve this novel objective for Social Studies teaching, learners' characteristics ought to be taken cognizance of.

Knowledge of learners' characteristics demands that teachers should be aware of them. This is because they provide the basis for effective classroom teaching and learning. Learners are known to portray different types of characteristics which are capable of determining their performance during the school year across discipline including Social Studies Education. Learners' characteristics are those qualities of a student that affect teaching and learning and cognition to a designated target group of learners. Experts in the measurement of academic performance often correlate personality traits of students on their academic performance. There are some dominant learners' characteristics that affect learning. These are linked with students' attitudinal problems. Some of these attitudes include procrastination, unfriendly disposition of students, skipping of class attendance, association with bad peers, coming to class unprepared, inability to understand difficult learning environment. This impact has been extensively documented in literature. One of such studies deals with the mediating role of academic motivation which was conducted on college students in Tehran, Iran where the effect of personality traits was measured on the academic performance of students. Muntean, Nires, Sima-Comaniciu, M̃arus, Z̃agan and Lukacs (2022) found that students motivation as a trait has effect on academic performance. It is noted that the personality of student is a factor affecting the way teacher relates with them and that it determine the extent to which students perform under a learning experience. The implication according to Igberaharha and Onyesom (2021) is that teaching and learning effectiveness is related to the type of characteristics portrayed by learners. Against this backdrop, this study investigated the extent to which learner's characteristics affects students' academic performance in Upper Basic Social Studies in Delta State.

Statement of the Problem

Learners characteristics are some of the mediating factors in students' learning that invariably determine their academic performance with reference to how they grasp the contents of the subject. This refers to learners' noticeable quality that determines his/her abilities to learn under instructions by an instructor. Scholar like Sean (2019) have examine how learners characteristics like location, age and sex influences students' academic performance where he blamed the characteristics of the learner for their dwindling school performance. Therefore, the question of the study is: Will the characteristics of the learners' impacts their academic performance in Upper Basic Social Studies in Delta State, Nigeria?

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the effect of location on learners' characteristics on pretest posttest mean scores on the academic performance of students in Upper Basic Social Studies in Delta State?

- ii. What is the effect of sex on learners' characteristics on pretest posttest mean scores on academic performance of students in Upper Basic Social Studies in Delta State?
- iii. What is the effect of age on learner's characteristics on pretest posttest mean score on academic performance of students in Upper Basic Social Studies in Delta State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

- i. There is no significant effect of location on learners' characteristics and their pretest posttest mean scores and academic performance of students in Upper Basic secondary schools in Delta State.
- ii. There is no significant effect of sex on learners characteristics on their pretest posttest mean scores and academic performance of students in Upper Basic secondary schools in Delta State
- iii. There is no significant effect of age on learners characteristics on their pretest posttest mean scores and academic performance of students in Upper Basic secondary schools in Delta State

Learners Characteristics and Learning Outcome

Learning outcome in school subjects including Social Studies of the Upper basic education is often discussed from the cognitive domain and the perspective of learners' characteristics. Learners (students) characteristics are conceptualized from the view point of science of learning and cognition. Conceptually, Hendrick and Paul (2011) are of the opinion that learners' characteristic implies to students noticeable quality that determines his/her ability to learn under instruction by an instructor. By implication, learning effectiveness by students could be hinged on different number of inherent and exhibited qualities. Most of these identified qualities towards learning amongst students either helped to promote high learning or the reverse may be the case. Thus, learners' characteristics formed one of the basis in the measure of students' performance in test scores.

Many learners come to the learning environment (classroom) with abilities and inabilities in the qualities. This means the type of quality the child brings to the class can decide the extent to which his/her learning can be judged. Most authors in the science of learning, attempts to designate a good student with different suggestions. Their suggestion aligned with what could account for a successful student in the school system as a requirement in all levels of schooling. According to The Roam 241 TEAM (2011), there are measurable characteristics of students that relates to students learning outcome. The list of quality expected of students consists of flexibility, optimism, motivation, persistence, strong work ethics, self-advocacy, organization, connection, consistency, and support. It is believed that each and or all of these qualities are essential for successful learning.

The study by Debjyoti (2017) listed nine qualities of a good student to include; punctual, attentive, consistent, honest, doesn't whine, knows his/her strength and weakness very well; and try to overcome weakness. At the same time enhance their strength, knows his/her aim very well, never lies to himself/herself and last but not the least, a good student is always a good person, humble and kind. Lee (2018) contributed to the listing in the measure of learners' quality. His listing are as follows; good learners are curious, good learners pursue understanding diligently, good learners recognize that a lot of learning isn't fun, failure frightens good learners but they know its beneficial, good learners make knowledge their own, good learners never run out of question and good learners share what they have learned. In addition, Alston (2018) identified ten good qualities that characterized successful

learner to include intellectual curiosity, self driven, good time manager, admitting you do not understand, construction and original, seeing the big picture and thinking broadly, solid reading, writing and analyzing skill, communication skills, performing under pressure, and understanding others perspectives. Derrick (2019) on his part, discovered that students' who possess certain characteristics that makes them ideal students exhibit the following characteristics to include; they ask questions, they are hard workers, they are involved, they are leaders, they are motivated, they are problem solvers, they seize opportunities, they are solid citizens, they have a support system and they are trust worthy.

Students' characteristic does not operate in a vacuum. They have bearing on the teachers and their teaching effectiveness. The importance of teachers' knowledge of students' characteristics cannot be overemphasized. This is because an oversight on the part of the teacher on the number of characteristics of students in his/her classroom can result to leaving many students unattended to. The role of the teacher is to develop capacity. It is assumed that the teacher of education will recognize the essential characteristics of students that will encourage high performing students. University of Northern Iowa (2019) recognizes the fact that knowledge of students' characteristics influences teaching effectiveness in high learning outcome and high achievement of students in learning outcome.

There is the dynamics in the teaching and learning of Social Studies education. Two of the most dynamics comes from the teacher of education and the learners under the teacher of education. In addition, it seems that a third influence in the dynamics as shown by the psychology of learning is a factor or influence of a social environment. Thus, the combination of these factors or influences appears to be the determinants in the measure of learning outcome in Social Studies education (Igberaharha&Onyesom, 2021). It is important that teachers of education should take cognizance of the traits found on the students to be able to help them to learn and improve on their learning outcome.

Most students learning outcome is determined by their personality traits. This is notwithstanding the fact that many factors contributes to students learning outcome. According to Australian Qualification Council (2013), learning outcome are statements that describes significant and essential learning that learners have achieved and can reliably demonstrate at the end of a course or programme. In other words, learning outcomes identify what the learner will know and be able to do by the end of a course or programme. By implication, students are expected to demonstrate varied abilities, skills and competence based on their exposure to learning experience. This will enable the teacher to understand the extent to which the students have learnt and be able to make appropriate statement about the child learning outcome. Kintu and Zhu (2016), correlate students characteristics to their learning outcome. Result of their study conducted in Uganda University environment involving 270 respondents show that there is a correlate between learners attitude and their performance. This means that negative characteristics in the learners has a capacity to influence their learning outcome. The result has implication for Social Studies students as well as Social Studies teachers who are responsible for moderating the characteristics of their learner as well as evaluating their learning.

Achanya (2018) on his part explored factors related to students learning achievement in Nepal. The author observed that every student has different characteristics. Therefore, the style and pace of learning depend on the context – personal characteristics and home background of the learner. Similarly, the students learning is influenced by the curriculum as well as teacher and school related factors. Even though personal characteristics affects learners outcome, there are host of other variables that influences learners outcome. These variables are context, home background,

curriculum, teacher and school related factors. He also reveals as follows that teaching-learning activities are usually conducted in classroom without bias or discrimination. Yet, the performance of students differs from individual. We cannot tell exactly what factor enable students learning, while it is not easy to differentiate between the most and least influential factors. These are always debatable issues. However, there is no doubt that the roles of the different factors related to curriculum, school, teachers and students are crucial for students learning (Igberaharha, 2014). The importance of the listed variables has a link with the method and materials teacher and learner engaged in during the learning process.

Academic Performance in Upper Basic Social Studies

There are several theoretical perspective on factors affecting the academic performance of Social Studies students as well as other disciplines. This was contained in the observation by Mpho, Adriana and Mabokang (2009), the authors are of the opinion that association of factors affecting academic performance of students are in isolation, making it difficult to track academic variable to a particular factor. This has contributed to the difficulties involved in predicting academic performance of Social Studies education from a single perspective. The peculiarity of Social Studies education makes it more demanding. This is because, the upper basic Social Studies programme has a broad curriculum which constitutes enormous reasons why most teachers find it difficult to complete syllabus or their scheme of work. This is considered as a factor emanating from a teachers level of involvement in the teaching and learning of Social Studies. This means that teachers' contribute to whatever academic performance students' experiences in the school system

Farroq, Shafiq and Berhanu (2011) were concerned about the factor of economic status and parents' education as factors affecting most students' academic performance. Their study was conducted among secondary school students in a metropolitan city of Pakistan. The respondents for the study were ten grade students were three hundred male and three hundred female students were utilized. A survey was conducted by using a questionnaire for information gathering about different factors relating to academic performance of students. The academic performance was geared by the result of their 9th grade annual examination. Standard t-test and ANOVA were applied to investigate the effect of different factors on students' achievement. The result of the study revealed that socio-economic status (SES) and parents education have a significant effect on students overall academic achievement as well as achievement in the subject of mathematics and English. The high and average socio-economic level affects the performance more than the lower levels. It is very interesting that parents' education means more than their occupation in relation to their children academic performance at school.

The deduction from the empirical study by Farroq, Shafiq and Berhanu points to the fact that students from literate home background have advantage over their counterpart because such students are being assisted in their academic work at home by their parents which is likely to increase their chances of high performance in test scores. In other words, the effect of home background to academic performance cannot be overlooked. Many educators have suggested that the home a child comes from plays significant role in how the child learns and its effect on his performance when evaluated. A study conducted among secondary school students in Ebonyi State using Onitsha Local Government area as case study by Amadi and Ani (2017) on the effect of home background on educational development of students reveals that home background has effect on academic development with the long run on their academic performance both in internal and external examinations. The expectation is that students will always be assisted by educated parents by checking their roles, effecting corrections on their notes, assisting with the homework assignment,

creating the atmosphere of positive learning habits which constitute educational development of the child (Onyesom&Igberaharha, 2021). The suggestion from the above observation is the assumption that poor academic performance amongst students has family colouration, especially for family with poor condition making it difficult to provide extra payment for home lesson teachers whose parents will not be available to provide the services.

In line with the family background factor on academic performance, Ugwuja (2010) researched on the problems. It was his aim to determine the extent to which family educational factor contributes to students' academic achievement in school. The study was conducted in Nssuka educational zone in Enugu State involving twelve schools with eight hundred and sixteen participants who responded to a questionnaire on family background influence used in the collection of data. The result of analysis indicated that students from educated parents achieve more than those from uneducated parents in academics; students from high income status parents enjoys considerable advantage in academic achievement than students of low income status parents because their parents were able to afford necessary materials and equipments needed for effective learning in the school; parental level of motivation also influenced students' academic achievement because motivation and reward serves as a form of reinforcement for children learning at school. From the foregoing, students from high economic status will have more supports from their parents in terms of funding for the improvisation and provision of instructional materials that encourage learning.

School type – according to the study of Okon and Achibong (2015), attempts to associate it with students' academic performance in Social Studies with particular reference to schools and students' in Akwalbom State. The school type consists of private and public secondary schools. Both type of schools produced a sampled figure of nine hundred and forty participants recruited for the investigation. Existing results of the said participants were collated (ex post facto design) and were analyzed using the t-test parameter. From the analysis, it was discovered that students in type I school (private) performed better than those in type II school (public) in Social Studies. This result is expected because Bedi and Garg (2002) observed that private secular secondary school provide a more valuable education than public secondary school. Private schools look stronger on observable measures and are widely perceived as superior. The implication is that students' performance in variety of school subjects could be attributed to what Sunil and Madhuni (2005) considers as poor school performance.

According to Sunil and Madhuni (2005) there are many reasons for children to underperform at school, such as medical problems, below average intelligence, specific learning disability, technological application, attention deficit, hyperactivity disorder, emotional problems, poor socio-cultural home environment, psychiatric disorders and even environmental causes. Each and or all of the aforementioned problems negatively affect a child's abilities ranging from learning ability with its consequences on their performances. Whereas, the authors observed as follows; that every child should have the opportunity to achieve his or her academic potentials. It is generally noticed that at least 20% of children in a classroom get poor marks – they are scholastically backward. Poor school performance should be seen as a 'symptom' reflecting a larger underlying problem in children (Igberaharha, 2016). By inclination, poor marks represent poor academic performance which is one of the most reliable indices for judging students' performance in schools. Andrew and Hansen (2012) stated that marks predicts educational expectations. The authors are of the view that students' marks are the most effective way of assessing the performance of individual as well as collective members in a class. They postulated that students mark are the most consistent and reliable source of information for students regarding their own ability or their level of intelligence. According to the authors, marks are a consistent, accessible and easy-to-interpret source of information about students own

achievements, habits and attitudes. By implication, the use of marks is important because it helps the class teachers and the school system to categorize the students' performance on A – excellent, B – very good, C – good, D – pass, E – weak pass and F – fail. In line with the study by Osadebe (2009), marks are used to describe students' academic performance. According to him, unbiased judgment about the status of students performance in terms of pass or fail when students are evaluated exonerates the teacher against external aggression, particularly parents. He found students mark as a simplest means of judging performance involving statements such as poor, fail, promoted, good, poor and satisfactory among others. In other words, Osadebe believed awarding of marks or scores in the measure of academic performance is carried out to ascertain the worth, value and how credible a students learning outcome could be determined. It is against this backdrop, this study will correlate students test score with other abilities of the students such as improvisation of instructional resources.

Methodology

The study is a quasi-experimental research design. The population for the study was made up of the Social Studies students in Delta State, Nigeria, numbering 54, 205 in all. The study adopted the simple random sampling method of balloting type to select sampled participants with which the researcher conducted the experiment involving treatment of the experimental and the control group respectively. The study adopted the Social Studies Achievement Test (SSAT) from the standardized instrument for Basic Examination Certificate Examination in Delta State – 2023. The pretest and posttest treatment were utilized for the collection of data; where a six week teaching lesson note was prepared to accommodate the content from the themes in the standardized test used for the Basic Education Certificate Examination in Delta State. The researcher employed the descriptive analysis of the Mean Score and Standard Deviation to answer the stated research questions while the null hypotheses formulated for the study were analyzed using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA).

Results

Research Question One

What is the effect of location on learners' characteristics on pretest posttest mean scores on the academic performance of students in Upper Basic Social Studies in Delta State? The result is presented in Table 1 as follows

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the effect of location on learners' characteristics in Pretest Posttest mean scores on Academic Performance of Students in Upper Basic Social Studies in Delta State

Groups	N	Pre-test		Posttest		Posttest Mean Diff
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Urban	436	35.93	9.75	43.25	3.81	
Rural	44	39.48	8.32	-3.55	42.58	3.62
Total	850					0.67

Table 1 revealed that urban location had a pretest mean score of 35.93 and standard deviation of 9.75 and rural location had a pretest mean score of 39.48 and standard deviation of 8.32 with a mean difference of -3.55; while urban location had a posttest mean scores of 43.25 with standard deviation of 3.81 and rural location had a posttest mean score of 42.58 and standard deviation of 3.62 with difference in mean score of 0.67. Based on this result, the question is answered that location has effect on learners' characteristics and their academic performance.

Research Question Two

What is the effect of sex on learners' characteristics on pretest posttest mean scores on academic performance of students in Upper Basic Social Studies in Delta State? The result is presented in Table 2 as follows:

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the effect of Sex on learners' Characteristics in Pretest Posttest Mean Scores on Academic Performance of Students in Upper Basic Social Studies in Delta State

Groups	N	Pre-test		Posttest		Mean Diff
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Male	417	38.48	8.89	43.19	3.83	
Female	433	37.17	9.44	42.56	3.95	0.63
Total	850					

Table 2 shows that male had a pretest mean score of 38.48 and standard deviation of 8.89 and female had a pretest mean score of 37.17 and standard deviation of 9.44 with a mean difference of 1.31; while male has a posttest mean score of 43.19 and standard deviation of 3.83 and female had a posttest mean score of 42.56 and standard deviation of 3.95 with a mean difference of 0.63. The result has answered the question that sex has effect on learner's characteristics and academic performance of students in Upper Basic Social Studies in Delta State.

Research Question Three

What is the effect of age on learner's characteristics on pretest posttest mean score on academic performance of students in Upper Basic Social Studies in Delta State? The result is presented in Table 3 as follows

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Effect of Age on Learners' Characteristics in Pretest Posttest Mean Scores on Academic Performance of Students in Upper Basic Social Studies in Delta State

Groups	N	Pre-test		Posttest		Mean Diff
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
8-10 years	42	39.76	6.36	42.36	4.13	
11-14 years	808	37.54	9.45	42.92	3.69	-0.56
Total	850					

Table 3 shows that ages 8-10years had a pretest mean score of 39.76 and standard deviation of 6.36 and ages 11-14 years had a pretest mean score of 37.54 and standard deviation of 9.45 with a mean difference of 2.22 while ages 8-10 years had a posttest mean score of 42.92 and standard deviation of 3.69 with a mean difference of -0.56. Based on this result, the question is answered that there is effect of age on learners' characteristics and academic performance of students in Upper Basic Social Studies in Delta State.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant effect of location on learners' characteristics and their pretest posttest mean scores and academic performance of students in Upper Basic secondary schools in Delta State.

Table 4: One-Way ANCOVA Analysis on Effect of Location on Learners Characteristics in their Pretest Posttest Mean Scores and Academic Performance of Students in Upper Basic Secondary Schools in Delta State

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	sig
Current Model	29.782	3	9.927	.655	.580
Intercept	10440.394	1	10440.394	688.366	.000
Pretest	2.528	1	2.528	.167	.683
Posttest	3.931	1	3.931	.259	.611
Location	17.913	1	17.913	1.181	.277
Error	12831.217	846	15.167		
Total	1575837.000	850			
Corrected Total	12860.999	849			

Table 4 shows a F-value of 1.181 at $df=1$, $P(\text{sig})= 0.277$ and alpha level of 0.05. The result indicates that the p-value of 0.277 is greater than the alpha level of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant effect of location on learners' characteristics on the pretest posttest mean scores and academic performance of students in Upper Basic secondary schools in Delta State is accepted.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant effect of sex on learners' characteristics on their pretest posttest mean scores and academic performance of students in Upper Basic secondary schools in Delta State

Table 5: One-Way ANCOVA Analysis on Effect of Sex on Learners Characteristics in their Pretest Posttest Mean Scores and Academic Performance of Students in Upper Basic Secondary Schools in Delta State

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	sig
Current Model	53.715	3	17.905	1.183	.315
Intercept	10700.929	1	10700.979	706.866	.000
Pretest	11.064	1	11.064	.731	.393
Posttest	11.337	1	11.337	.749	.387
Sex	24.196	1	24.196	1.598	.206
Error	12807.284	846	15.139		
Total	1575837.000	850			
Corrected Total	12860.999	849			

The result in Table 5 indicate that a F-value of 1.598 at $df=1$, $P(\text{sig})=0.206$ and alpha level of 0.05. The result of the analysis shows that the p-value of 0.206 is greater than the alpha level of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant effect of sex on learners' characteristics on their pretest posttest mean scores and academic performance of students in Upper Basic secondary schools in Delta State is retained.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant effect of age on learners' characteristics on their pretest posttest mean scores and academic performance of students in Upper Basic secondary schools in Delta State

Table 6: One-Way ANCOVA Analysis on Effect of Age on Learners Characteristics in their Pretest Posttest Mean Scores and Academic Performance of Students in Upper Basic Secondary Schools in Delta State

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	sig
Current Model	11.135	3	3.712	.244	.865
Intercept	10349.185	1	10349.185	681.362	.000
Pretest	3.446	1	3.446	.227	.634
Posttest	1.417	1	1.417	.093	.760
Age	6.670	1	6.670	.439	.508
Error	12849.864	846	15.189		
Total	1575837.000	850			
Corrected Total	12860.999	849			

The result in Table 6 indicate that a F-value of 0.439 at $df=1$, $P(\text{sig})=0.508$ and alpha level of 0.05. The result of the analysis shows that the p-value of 0.508 is greater than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant effect of age on learners' characteristics on their pretest posttest mean scores and academic performance of students in Upper Basic secondary schools in Delta State is retained.

Discussion of Findings

The test involving the pretest posttest mean score to determine the effect of location on learners' characteristics as it affects their academic performance was accepted; meaning that, there is no significant effect of location on the learners characteristics such as sex and age on their academic performance. The implication of the result shows that students in urban and rural Upper Basic Social Studies are not affected in their academic performance due to location, sex and age, respectively. This finding aligned with the work by Jamestown Community College (2020) where it found that students' responsibility occurs when students take an active role in their learning and not simply by the location or the characteristics status of the students. The study also found that students are accountable for their academic success by demonstrating competence, make valuable choices and take actions which would lead towards their educational goal. Okpe (2018) agreed with the finding. He found that students' location, sex and age are not as valuable as the effect of instructional materials in the measure of academic performance among students. The researcher discovered that the academic achievement of Physics students depends on the use of instructional materials and teachers attitude to arouse the interest of the Physics students.

Tety (2016) found no correlation between the effect of location and academic performance among students in Tanzania. Rather, the correlate is between instructional material and academic performance. This implies that wherever the students are, urban, rural, male, female and of different age ratio, the effect of instructional material is more important in the measure of their academic performance. A similar study conducted in Cross River State, Nigeria by Arop et al. (2015) found that it is instructional materials that make the greatest effect on students' achievement in science concept as against the notion that location has effect on their learning outcome.

The outcome of this test measuring the effect of sex on learners' characteristics and academic performance found that there is no significant effect of sex. The hypothesis is retained because sex, that is being male or female does not account for the individual academic performance. The finding shows that male and female students in Social Studies can be measured on their merit. This agrees with the study by Nnamani and Oyibe (2016) who found that male and female secondary school students taught Social Studies by male teachers obtained higher mean scores than male and female students taught Social Studies by female teachers and female students taught Social Studies by male teachers perform better than the masculine students taught Social Studies by male teachers and vice versa. Based on this finding, teacher factor prominently affect the learning outcome of the students and not based on their sexes. Ogheneakoke and Akpochafo (2015) found that teacher competence account for the way students learn and the influence the teacher has of the students is the most considered factor and not the students' sex as affirmed by the test of significance of the study.

The study by Parajuh and Thapa (2017) agreed with the finding of no significant effect of sex on students' academic performance. The study found that the perceived difference in the performance of students (male/female) was attributed to better infrastructure, availability of improved instructional materials and a better organized school system that oversees the competence of teachers and the outcome of students' performance in their test scores. This finding shifted the blame from students' characteristics of sex to a factor that enhances learning in the school system. The finding in the study by Adigun et al. (2015) was in agreement with the result of the test. In this study, the researchers investigated the effect of gender on students' academic performance in computer studies in secondary schools in New Bussa, Burgu local government AREA OF Niger State, Nigeria. Finding shows that male students had slightly better performance than their female counterparts.

Dania (2014) also supported the result of the test in his study that investigated the effect of gender on students' academic achievement in secondary school Social Studies. The study was a quasi-experimental of non-randomized pretest posttest control group involving 180 Upper Basic II students in Delta and Edo States respectively. The result found that gender – sex had no significant effect on students' achievement in Social Studies. This result confirmed previous results that support the view that sex factor is not correlated with academic performance.

Obtained result drawn on this hypothesis shows that there is no significant effect of age on learners' characteristics on their pretest posttest mean score and academic performance of students in Upper Basic secondary school Social Studies in Delta State. Since the hypothesis is retained, it means that age does not correlate academic performance in Upper Basic Social Studies in the study area. Derrick (2019) found that the age of a student have bearing on the teacher and their teaching effectiveness. University of Northern Iowa (2019) found that knowledge of students' age as one of the students characteristics influences teaching effectiveness. This means that while age does not determine academic performance, it does affect the learning process. The age factor of learners appears to influence their learning abilities and capabilities and not directly on their academic performance. This is consistent with the study by Fische et al. (2016). These researchers found that the age of the child matters when it comes to learning abilities.

The study by Momany et al (2015) disagree with the result in their study that investigated the effect of students' age on academic motivation and academic performance among secondary school students in Kikuyu Suburban area of Kenya. The study was concerned on how the age of students affects learning outcome. The study adopted the ex post facto to extract data from a sampled figure of 489 students. Generated data were analyzed using the ANOVA statistical method. Findings show that there is a correlate linear relationship between academic motivation and academic performance, as

well as the age of the students have significant impact on the academic motivation and their academic performance. The study by Eze et al. (2015) also disagree with the result of the tested null hypothesis. They found that age and gender have effects on the academic achievement of the students.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Attempt was made to establish the effect that learners' characteristics have on their pretest posttest mean scores on students of Upper Basic Social Studies when taught construction and lecture method respectively. The study found that learners irrespective of their characteristics, that is, location, sex and age, had improved academic performance in their pretest posttest mean scores. Hence, learners characteristics do impact students' academic performance in Social Studies

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