PREDICTING STUDENTS' SENIOR SSCE PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE FROMPERFORMANCE IN JUNIOR SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION IN KOGI STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract: *The study investigated prediction of Senior School Certificate Examination performance in English Language from the Junior School Certificate Examination performance in AnkpaLocal Government Area. The study employed a correlational design. A sample of 464 students were used for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to compose the sample; made up of only students who sat for 2013 and 2014 Junior Secondary Certificate Examination (JSCE) and their 2016 and 2017 Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) in AnkpaL.G.A. Two research questions were answered and two corresponding hypotheses were tested in the study at 0.05 level of significance. Data used for the study were collected directly from school principals and examining body (KOGI State Ministry of Education). The data obtained was analysed using simple regression statistical technique. The findings of the study showed that JSCE English language is a weak predictor of SSCE English Language performance for both years (for 2013/2016 β = 0.304, P < 0.05; for 2014/2017 β = 0.198, P <0.05). Amongst others it was recommended that qualified and competent teachers should be contracted to teach English Language in both Junior and Senior secondary school, so as to improve learners' performance.*

Keywords: English Language, SSCE, Performance

INTRODUCTION

English Language is Nigeria's lingua-franca and as such is very important to Nigeria as a nation.

From ancient time to this contemporary era, language (speaking, reading and writing) have remained the foundation of all kinds of education and human interaction. First, Language is defined as a system of communication consisting of sounds, words and grammar. Thus, English Language is a system of communication used by a given people (especially English-speaking countries) and it usually consists of sounds, words and grammar. Language is the means of communication and medium through abstract thinking becomes meaningful and understood by others.

English Language is a core subject in the secondary school curriculum. It is regarded as a key, which opens doors to scientific and technical knowledge, and it is indispensable to the economic and political development of vast areas of the world. One major area where the importance of English language cannot be overlooked is its provision of access to education, which is the most powerful instrument for social, cultural, religious and economic progress (Alufohai, 2016). More so, English language curriculum for UBE introduce the learners to four unifying skills, namely: reading, listening and speaking, grammatical accuracy and writing. With this curriculum, it is expected that learners should develop

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reading ability and communicative competence (FME, 2012b).

Current government policy in Nigeria also specifies at least a pass in mathematics and English Language at the Junior secondary level (lower level) as a prerequisite for admission into SSI. In fact, it is also a prerequisite for admission into tertiary institutions in the country. Therefore, for evaluation of secondary education in Nigeria; two forms of examinations are taken, namely: Junior School Certificate Examination (JSCE) and Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE), which mark the end of learning for both school programmes.

The Junior Secondary Certificate Examination (JSCE) is an external examination written by students who their ninth year (i.e. JSS III or Basic 9) of basic education. JSCE is used for selection or enrolment of students into the Senior Secondary School. Thus, any student admitted to the senior secondary school is expected to have the required abilities needed to adapt to the educational task of the senior secondary school. Students' JSCE achievement has been very encouraging over the years in the state, having recorded an average percentage pass of 91 percent (KOGI State Ministry of Education, 2017).

Equally, the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) is an external examination written by students who are in their final level of Senior Secondary School Education (i.e. SSIII). SSCE is usually conducted by National Examination Council or West African Examination Council. For the purpose of this study SSCE conducted by WAEC was chosen because it is the first choice examination for final year secondary school students, especially in government owned schools as most of the students find it financially burdensome to write both NECO and WAEC SSCE.

Despite the overwhelming advantage of this core subject (English Language) to societal growth and national development, students' academic achievement in Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) has become a major concern to the entire nation because of the high failure rate recorded.

Below is a summary of students' performance in WASSCE from 2010-2018:

Year	%Pass
2010	23.71
2011	30.91
2012	38.81
2013	38.30
2014	31.28
2015	38.68
2016	52.97
2017	59.22
2018	49.98

Source: Adapted from Asuru (2017).

The poor trend of students' academic performance in SSCE can be traced to a number of factors according WAEC Chief Examiner's report and they include: poor educational funding, poor coverage of syllabus, unavailability of teaching aids, students' interest and attitude towards learning, students' ability or prior academic achievement etc. (WAEC, 2008). However, for the purpose of this studyour scope will be limited to the issue of students' ability or prior academic achievement in the same or related discipline as a potent variable of academic performance. In the context of this study, performance in the Junior School Certificate Examination (JSCE) English Language would be a worthy variable to measure students' ability in the higher level taken in the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE).

Therefore, it is vital to highlight some of the empirical studies carried out in this area by other researchers in an attempt to find solution to this issue of "mass failure" in external exams.

Some include; Adeyemi (2008) who investigated "Predicting Students' Performance in Senior Secondary Certificate Examination from Performance in Junior Secondary Certificate Examinations in Ondo State,

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Nigeria." The results obtained showed positive and significant relationship between JSCE and SSCE students' scores in English(r= 0.62). However, the results in a study by Udo (2011) who studied "Junior School Certificate Examination results as predictors of performance in Senior School Certificate Examination in Aba Education zone of Abia State;" showed that WASSCE, JSCE did not significantly predict performance in SSCE English Language (r= 0.008).

Furthermore, it was observed that most of the studies in this regard was done outside the target region (Obio/Akpor, KOGI State). Thus, it is necessary to study prediction of Senior School Certificate Examination performance English language from the Junior School Certificate Examination performance in KogiLocal Government Area.

Statement of the Problem

The tide of poor performance in Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) conducted by West African Examination Council (WAEC) has become a regular occurrence in the educational sector of Nigeria in recent years. With the pass percentage of SSCE achievement (i.e. those who passed five credits including Mathematics and English Language) declining from 59.22% in 2017 to 49.98% in 2018. Specifically, in 2018, there was a drop in the performance in English Language (54.06% to 46.79%).

Even so, what is more startling is the fact that these students involved in poor performance in SSCE are the same individuals who obtained very high grades in JSCE and were consequently admitted into the senior secondary school.This occurrence raises questions on the validity of the JSCE subjects as a yardstick to assess students' capability to cope effectively with related discipline in the senior secondary level. Also, scholars have presented different results on the predictive validity of JSCE subjects on SSCE achievement in the different states of Nigeria, as JSCE is state-specific. Therefore, with these prevailing issues, it has become pertinent to study

prediction of Senior School Certificate Examination performance in English Language from the Junior School Certificate Examination performance in Ankpa Local Government Area.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the prediction of Senior School Certificate Examination performance in English Language from the Junior School Certificate Examination performance in Ankpa Local Government Area. In specific terms, the study seeks to:

1. Find out whether students' 2013 JSCE English Language performance predict their 2016 SSCE English Language performance in AnkpaLocal Government Area.

2. Find out whether students' 2014 JSCE English Language performance predict their 2017 SSCE English Language performance in AnkpaLocal Government Area.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were postulated for the study. These hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho_1: Students' 2013 JSCE English performance performance does not significantly predict their 2016 SSCE English performance in AnkpaLocal Government Area.

Ho_2: Students' 2014 JSCE English performance does not significantly predict their 2017 SSCE English performance in AnkpaLocal Government Area.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a correlational research design. Correlational research is adopted for investigation of the magnitude and direction of relationship that exists between a dependent variable (Criterion variable) and one or more independent variables (predictor variables) (Kpolovie, 2010). Kpolovie further stated that correlational research is very suitable for investigations

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aimed at prediction of one variable on others (one or more variable).

The researcher employed correlational design to allow for the prediction of the criterion variable (SSCE) from the predictor variable (JSCE).

Population of the Study

The population for this study consists of all the public secondary school students in AnkpaLGA who sat for both Junior Secondary Certificate Examination (JSCE) and Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) in the same school in AnkpaLocal Government Area of KOGI State. Therefore, only public schools who had both Junior and Senior Secondary Sections were used for the study. Thirteen Public Secondary School (out of the 23 Public Schools) within the target area met the criteria for the study, which generated the total population of 1,830 students eligible for the study (Source: KOGI state Ministry of Education, 2019).

Sample

A sample of 464 students was used for this study. The chosen sample exceeds the minimum sample size estimated using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) graph as cited by Kpolovie (2011).

Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling technique was employed to select individuals for the study. The researcher purposely selected only students who sat for 2013 and 2014 JSCE English Language and, 2016 and 2017 WASSCE English Language in the same Public schools within the target population (Ankpa).

Sources of Data (Primary/Secondary)

The data for the study is a secondary data that was obtained directly from the official result document of both Kogi State Ministry of Education and WAEC, which are the examining bodies in charge of JSCE and SSCE respectively. Also, the sampled public secondary schools in AnkpaLocal Government Area were used for data collection.

Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Junior School Certificate Examination (JSCE) and Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) are standardized achievement tests developed and vetted by subject specialist and test experts in the respective examining bodies with regards to the school syllabus. Therefore, the validity and reliability for the two exams has long been established. To support the above claim, it was stated that test used by various public examination bodies (WAEC and SMoE) are often better developed (i.e. have appropriate psychometric properties) than the ones made by teachers in school setting even within the universities (Obioma&Salau, 2007).

Method of Data Collection

The data for this study, which is 2013 and 2014 JSCE English Language grades and, 2016 and 2017 WASSCE English grades were collected directly by the researcher from respective authorities which includes: School Principals and KOGI State Ministry of Education.

Methods of Data Analysis

Simple regression analysis ('r' and r-squared) was used to answer all the research questions, while t-test associated with the regression analysis was used to test the significance of the corresponding hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: Students' 2013 JSCE English Language performance does not significantly predict their 2016 SSCE English Language performance in public secondary schools in KogiL.G.A.

Table 1a: The Extent ofPrediction between Students' 2013 JSCE English Language and 2016 SSCE English Language

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a)	Model Summary[b]				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	**.304**[a]	**.092**	.088	.515	
a. Predictors: (Constant), JSCE ENGLISH					
b. Dependent Variable: SSCE ENGLISH					

Results from Table 1a yielded an r of 0.304 and R^2 of 0.092. While R^2 of 0.092 means that only 9.2% of variance in 2016 SSCE English Language performance is predicted by their 2013 JSCE English Language performance in AnkpaLocal Government Area.

Table 1b: Testing the Significance of Standardized Regression Coefficient (β) for Students' Performance in 2013 JSCE English Language and 2016 SSCE English Language.

Coefficients[a]								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig. (P-value)		
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	1.543	.210		7.332	.000		
	JSCE ENGLISH	.292	.066	**.304**	**4.395**	**.000**		
a. Dependent Variable: SSCE ENGLISH								

Also, the result from table 4.2b reveals that Beta (β) value of 0.304 produced a t-value of 4.395 which is significant at P (0.00) < 0.05. The result is significant and the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that students' 2013 JSCE English Language performance significantly predict their 2016 SSCE English Language performance in AnkpaLocal Government Area. The regression equation for predicted SSCE English Language scores is Y = 0.292x + 1.54 (Y' = Bx + a) where 'x' is JSCE English Language raw score for each candidate.

Hypothesis 2: Students' 2014 JSCE English Language performance does not significantly predict their 2017 SSCE English Language performance in Ankpa Local Government Area.

Table 2a: The Extent of Prediction between Students' 2014 JSCE English Language and 2017 SSCE English Language

a)	Model Summary[b]				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	**.198**[a]	**.039**	.035	.460	
a. Predictors: (Constant), JSCE ENGLISH					
b. Dependent Variable: SSCE ENGLISH					

Results from Table 2a yielded an R of 0.198 and R^2 of 0.039. The resulting R^2 means 2014 JSCE English Language performance predicts (explains or account for)

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3.9% of variance in students' 2017 SSCE English
Table 2b: Testing the Significance of Standardized Regression Coefficient (β) for Students Performance in 2014 JSCE English Language and 2017 SSCE English Language

Coefficients[a]					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig. (P-value)
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.412	.184		7.679	.000
JSCE ENGLISH	.178	.054	**.198**	**3.299**	**.001**
a. Dependent Variable: SSCE ENGLISH					

Also, the result from table 2 reveals that Beta (β) value of 0.198 produced a t-value of 3.29 which is significant at P(0.001) < 0.05. The result is significant and the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that students' 2014 JSCE English Languageperformance significantly predict their 2017 SSCE English Language performance in AnkpaLocal Government Area. The regression equation for predicted SSCE English Language scores is Y = 0.178x + 1.41.

Discussion of Findings

Prediction of Students' SSCE English Language Performance from their JSCE English Language Performance

The results of the study showed that students' JSCE English Language performance significantly predict their SSCE English Language performance. Here, students' performance in both 2013 and 2014 JSCE English Language were predictors of their respective 2016 and 2017 SSCE English Language performance. The result is not too surprising as it affirms the fact that students' regular usage of English in their daily communication is rubbing off in their English Language performance. Also,

Language performance in AnkpaLocal Government Area. the result shows that students' who are good in English Language in the Junior level are prone to do well in the senior level.

This result is similar to the works of Falaye and Afolabi (2005), Ikirioma (2008) and Adeyemi (2008); all affirming that JSCE English Language is a predictor of SSCE English Language performance. However, the studies of Udo (2011) and Ugwuda and Abonyi (2013) disagrees with the present study as the found that JSCE English Language is not a significant predictor of SSCE English Language performance. The difference in result may be due to the following factors; location, year of study, type of school and seriousness of the students involved in the study. One key factor to the difference in results, is the year of the study. It was observed that students' SSCE performance in English and Mathematics prior to 2016 had been very poor (below 39%) as shown by Adama (2017).

The percentage of association for the first and second result of the study is 9.2% and 3.9% respectively, which is the percentage of variance in SSCE English Language accounted for by JSCE English Language performance. However, the percentage of lack of association between the variables is 90.8% and 96.1% respectively for the first and second result of the study. This implies that large percentage of the variance in SSCE English Language is not accounted for by their JSCE performance. Nevertheless, JSCE English Language is a predictor of SSCE English Language performance, though it is a weak predictor. This submission is supported by Kpolovie (2010), who stated that every predictive study should be interpreted in terms of its strength (using r and R^2) and not merely on statistical significance. He added that correlation coefficient that is less than 0.35 only allow poor group predictions and shows very slight relationship between variables even though they may be statistically significant.

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Conclusion

From the findings of this study students' JSCE English Language is a significant predictor of their SSCE English performance. However, the result revealed that JSCE is a poor predictor of SSCE performance in English Language.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Qualified and competent teachers should be contracted to teach English Language in both Junior and Senior secondary school, so as to improve learners' performance.

2. To enhance English language skills in secondary schools, Schools should introduce debate clubs, essay competitions and weekly review of major Newspapers. This programmes should be made compulsory for all students.

3. English and Literature teachers should be exposed to regular training and seminars to keep them abreast with recent modifications of English usage. This will equip them to impart efficient Language skills to the students.

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