

Students' Attitude and Achievement Motivation as Correlates of Performance in SSCE Arabic in Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated students' attitude and achievement motivation as correlates of performance in Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) Arabic Language in Kwara State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey method of correlational type was adopted for the study. Two hundred students were randomly selected as sampled for this study using simple random sampling technique. A researcher-designed-questionnaire was used to collect data on students' attitude and achievement motivation while a proforma was used to collect students' results in SSCE Arabic Language. The reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained for the questionnaire. The percentage was used to answer research question one and two while research question three was answered using mean and standard deviation. The hypothesis postulated was tested using multiple regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that majority of students were positively disposed to Arabic Language. Findings also revealed that there was a significant correlation among students' attitude, achievement motivation and academic performance in Arabic Language in Kwara State. It was therefore recommended, that Arabic teachers should make their lessons interesting to students using relevant illustrations and resources which would promote readiness for regular and steady learning and also assist in developing positive attitudes in students towards their subjects.

Keywords: Attitude, Achievement Motivation, Arabic Language, Performance, SSCE.

Introduction

Arabic as a foreign language has remained an essential part of Islamic religious education since its inception in Nigeria and this has played significant role in spreading Islamic civilization outside the Arabian Peninsula. Arabic education has flourished and passed different stages and media in Nigeria over the time (Muhammed, Hanafi&Abdwahab, 2014). The emergence of the language in the history of Nigeria which dates back to the 7th century C.E. shows that the early Nigerian Muslims gave much recognition to the language in order to understand their religion. As a result, Arabic and Islamic studies became twin subjects that cannot be easily separated from each other. The close relationship between Arabic and Islamic studies makes it easy for the students learning the language to access it from time to time and it is against this

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background that Muslims in Nigeria attached great commitments to the course of Arabic and Islamic studies (Kazeem, Arifi & Yusuf, 2015).

The primary objective of learning Arabic language by the Non-Arab Muslim scholars, in general and Nigerian Muslims in particular, was to obtain proper understanding of the *Qur'an* and by implications – Islam. The teaching and learning of Arabic language were given attention, while the design and the development of Arabic curriculum and the methodology of teaching Arabic language became the sole concern and responsibility of the traditional private Arabic teachers (Oladosu, 2000). However, the learners of the language, within the society, were relegated to the lowest ebb, as they were not recognised by the government and were not allowed to take any post in the government's administration and offices. Thus, the learning of the language was confined to the study of Islam while the ambit and functions of the Arabic language graduates were restricted to the mosque affairs only. They see it as a part of Islamic religion that needs to be handled with caution because of the multi-religious nature of the Nigeria. Thus, Arabic language is assumed by many people as a course that is offered in most of the Nigerian institutions solely because of Islamic studies (Ojerinde, 1986; Raji, 2002; & Lawal, 2008).

The job opportunity of Arabic language as a subject of study in Nigeria is threatened with the nature of the curriculum which is still very stagnant and yet to actualise the aims and objectives of teaching Arabic as a foreign language in Nigeria. This has been identified to be the main cause of poor number of students registering for Arabic Language in Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations such as WAEC, NECO, NABTEB etc. in Nigeria which has greater tendency to affect their academic performance in the subject (Kazeem, Arifi & Yusuf, 2015).

Academic performance is an area that parents, teachers and national leaders have keen interests in. Academic performance, according to Scott (2012), referred to how well a student is accomplishing his or her tasks and studies. Nwokocho and Amadike (2005) opined that students' academic performance is the yardstick for testing the educational quality of a nation. Hence, it is expedient to maintain a high performance in internal and mostly external examinations.

However, according to Abdullahi (2020), the performance of students in WAEC and NECO Arabic Language examinations for the past few years was encouraging. Several variables have been used to obtain information on the factors that facilitate students' academic performance. The pertinent among them are: students' attitude and achievement motivation (Onileowo, 2016).

Attitude is seen as a consistent tendency to react in a particular way, often positive or negative, towards any matter. Attitude possesses both cognitive and emotional components that involve feelings, beliefs and actions. It may not be directly observed but can be inferred from behaviour or opinion expressed (Adebisi, 2002). Adediwura and Tayo (2007) described attitude as a learned orientation or disposition towards an

object or a situation which provides a tendency to respond favourably or unfavourably to such an object or a situation. According to Akinyemi (2009), attitude is a tendency to respond in relation to some stimulus known to the individual. The stimulus which may be a person, a place, thing or a phenomenon is known as the object of the attitude. Psychologists believed that attitudes are measured since they are reflected in the response pattern to the attitude object. Since an attitude is thought to be something within the person which possesses the characteristics of an inclination or a predisposition the question of how it may be measured or identified becomes very important (Akinyemi, 2009).

It has been noticeable that during external or SSC Examinations, some students begin to doubt their intellectual abilities and come to believe that their efforts to achieve their aims may not bear expected results. These feelings in turn, lead to a low persistence level which could make them give up quickly even in a learning situation as soon as something appears to be difficult. According to WAEC Examiner's report, majority of the candidates exhibited a complete lack of preparation and understating of the questions in the examination. This is because they showed very shallow knowledge of the subject. WAEC further stated that many of the students rushed into attempting questions without understanding them while many misinterpreted the questions (WAEC, 2009).

Therefore, there is a great need for students to develop positive attitude and be motivated because they (positive attitude and motivation) are crucial to high performance in any subject. Motivation holds the key to the understanding human behaviour while at the same time a number of academic issues are of greater concern to achievement motivation of the students. Students who have been motivated are seen to perform better in school work, value their schooling, have academic goals, possess academic confidence and tend to have positive feelings of self-worth which is also a key for improving academic performance (Saadu, 2016). Achievement motivated students in most of the cases suffer fewer disciplinary problems, engage in their school-work with confidence and interest, and prove to be resilient in the face of setbacks and obstacles (Ayandele, 2014). Also, Marsh (2007) believes that achievement motivation is the reason why some people seem to be very keen to do well, while others seem to be reluctant to make an effort, and do not mind whether they are successful or not. Hence, this study examined students' attitude and achievement motivation as correlates of their performance in SSCE Arabic Language examinations in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study was to investigate students' attitude and achievement motivation as correlates in senior secondary certificate in Arabic examinations in Kwara state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined:

1. The attitude of students towards the learning of Arabic Language.
2. The profile of students' achievement motivation in Arabic Language.

3. The general academic performance of students in 2019 SSCE Arabic Language examination.
4. If there is any significant correlation among students' attitude, achievement motivation and students' performance in SSCE Arabic Language

Research Questions

Following questions were raised to guide this study.

1. What is the attitude of students towards the learning of Arabic Language?
2. What is the profile of students' achievement motivation in Arabic Language?
3. What is the general academic performance of students in 2019 SSCE Arabic Language examination?
4. Is there any significant correlation among students' attitude, achievement motivation and students' performance in SSCE Arabic Language?

Research Hypothesis

Following hypothesis was postulated for this study.

H₀₁: There is no significant correlation among students' attitude, achievement motivation and students' performance in SSCE Arabic Language

Methodology

This study was a correlational survey type. The population for this study were all Senior Secondary School students who offered Arabic Language. Two hundred students were randomly sampled for this study using a simple random sampling technique. A researcher's designed questionnaire was used to collect data on students' attitude and achievement motivation while a proforma was used to collect students' results in SSCE Arabic Language. Prior to 2019 SSCE examinations, the researcher went to all registered Islamic/Arabic schools and public schools that registered students for SSCE Arabic Language examinations and administered questionnaires to collect data on students' attitude and achievement motivation. During this exercise, students were asked to write their registration number on their questionnaire form. This was to enable the researcher to locate and relate their performance in SSCE Arabic Language to their attitude and achievement motivation. The questionnaire was made up of twenty items (10 item on attitude and 10 item on achievement motivation) structured in a four-point Likert-scale. The content validity of the instrument was determined by two experts. The reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained for the instrument. Data collected were therefore analysed using the percentage to answer Research Questions; One and Two while Research Question Three was answered using the mean and standard deviation. The hypothesis postulated was tested using the multiple regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Out of two hundred students that were selected as sample, 176 were males while 24 were females. This implies that the number of male students that offered Arabic Language is bigger than female students.

Research Question One: *What is the attitude of Senior Secondary School students to Arabic Language in Kwara State?*

The scores of each respondent on attitude to Arabic Language were subjected to percentage analysis. Given that attitude could either be positive or negative, students whose scores fell within score range 10 – 25 and 26 – 40 signified negative and positive attitudes respectively. The statistics of respondents' scores are summarised and presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Students' Attitude to Arabic Language in Kwara State

Attitudes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Negative	57	28.5
Positive	143	71.5
Total	200	100.0

Table 1 reveals that 143 (71.5%) of the respondents displayed positive attitude to Arabic Language while 57 (28.5%) of the respondents had negative attitude to Arabic Language. This shows that a majority of students were positively disposed to Arabic Language.

Research Question Two: *What is the achievement motivation of the Senior Secondary School students in Arabic Language?*

The scores of each respondent on achievement motivation to Arabic Language were estimated and subjected to percentage analysis. Given that motivation level could be high, fair or low, students whose scores fell within the score ranges of 10 – 20, 21 – 30 and 31 – 40 indicated low, fair and high motivation levels respectively. The statistics of respondents' scores are summarised and presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Students' Achievement Motivation Level to Arabic Language

Achievement Motivation Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	134	67.0%
Fair	49	24.5%
Low	17	8.5%
Total	200	100%

Table 2 shows that 134 (67.0%) of the respondents were highly motivated and 49 (24.5%) of the respondents were fairly motivated, while 17 (8.5%) of the respondents

had low achievement motivation to Arabic Language. This implies that a majority of Senior Secondary School students have high achievement motivation to Arabic Language in Kwara State.

Research Question Three: *What is the general performance of students in Arabic Language in WASSCE?*

A pro forma was used to obtain students' scores (performance) in 2019 WAEC Arabic Language. The results obtained which were in categorical form (A1, B2, B3 C4, C5, C6, D7, E8 & F9) were transformed into continuous data using a stanine (A1=9, B2=9, B3=7, C4=6, C5=5, C6=4, D7=3, E8=2 and F9=1). The statistics of students' performance in Arabic were presented in Table 2.

Table 3: General Performance of Students in Arabic Language in 2019 WASSCE

Subject	N	Mean Score	S. D.	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Remark
Arabic Language	200	5.73	1.14	3.00	9.00	C ₅

As shown in Table 3, the mean score of 5.73 was obtained with a minimum and maximum score of 3.00 and 9.00 respectively in Arabic Language examinations. This shows that the general performance of students in WASSCE Arabic Language is relatively high (C₅).

Hypothesis Testing

The null hypothesis postulated in this study was tested using the multiple regression at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis: *There is no significant correlation among students' attitude, achievement motivation and academic performance in Arabic Language.*

Table 4: Regression Analysis of Students' Attitude, Achievement Motivation and Academic Performance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Regression	136.712	2	45.571		
Residual	1071.115	197	5.437	8.382	0.000
Total	1207.827	199			

- Dependent variable: Performance in Arabic Language
- Predictors: (constant), attitude and achievement motivation

The model in Table 4 indicates the linear combination of predictor variables (i.e. students' attitude and achievement motivation). The F-value is 8.38 with 2 and 197 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the p-value of 0.00 is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the combination of the

independent variables significantly predicted the dependent variable ($F = 8.382, p < 0.05$). Thus, there is a significant correlation among students' attitude, achievement motivation and academic performance in Arabic Language in Kwara State. In order to ascertain the contribution of the two independent variables together, r-square was calculated and the output is in Table 5.

Table 5: Regression Model Summary of Students' Attitude and Achievement motivation on Academic Performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.054	0.003	-0.005	8.446

a. Predictors: (constant), attitude and achievement motivation

As shown in Table 5, the two independent variables (students' attitude and achievement motivation) jointly contributed R-Square of 0.003, representing 0.3% to the dependent variable (Students' Performance in Arabic Language). Thus, the total variance in academic performance of senior secondary school students was accounted for by the combination of students' attitude and achievement motivation. This implies that students' attitude and achievement motivation jointly explained 0.3% of the total variance on students' academic performance in Arabic Language in Kwara State. To determine the contribution of each of the independent variable, Beta Weight was calculated and the outputs are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Relative Contributions of Independent Variables to Students' Academic Performance in Arabic Language in Kwara State

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	60.305	2.374			25.399	0.000
Attitude	0.357	0.696	0.033		0.153	0.880
Achievement motivation	0.485	0.571	0.064		0.513	0.608

a. Dependent Variable: Performance in Arabic Language

b. Predictors: (constant), attitude and achievement motivation

Table 6 shows the relative contribution of each of the independent variable. The table reveals that the achievement motivation has the higher contribution of Beta weight of 0.064 with t-value of 0.513 then attitude which has the Beta weight of 0.033 with t-value of 0.153. This implies that achievement motivation has more significant

contribution than attitude on academic performance of students in Arabic Language. The contributions are presented in the equation below:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + \dots + b_nX_n$$

Thus, the weight of each independent variable in this study can therefore be substituted in the equation as

$$Y = 60.305 + .357X_1 + .485X_2$$

where

Constant (Students' performance) = 60.305

Students' Attitude (b_1) = 0.357

Students' Achievement Motivation (b_2) = 0.485

Findings and Discussion

The first finding from this study revealed that a majority of students were positively disposed to Arabic Language. This outcome disagrees with the finding of Uthman (2015) that students had negative attitude to Arabic Language. However, this result is in support of Saadu's (2013) outcome that there was a positive relationship between students' attitude and their academic performance. The type of learning experience, environment and teachers' instructional methods which the learners are exposed to might be accounted for their positive attitudes towards Arabic Studies as a subject in Senior Secondary School.

The second finding showed that the majority of Senior Secondary School students had high achievement motivation to Arabic Language in Kwara State. This result is in line with Ayandele (2014) who found students to be having high achievement motivation in Mathematics. This outcome also corroborates Kazeem, Arifi and Yusuf (2015) whose findings showed that many students are not motivated to learn Arabic language as studying it was perceived as a waste of time and not lucrative enough to cater for their future needs. However, this disagrees with the submission of Al-Hakani (1999) who opined that students were poorly motivated to achieve academically.

The third finding indicated that the general performance of students in WAEC SSCE Arabic Language was relatively high. This result is in line with the study of Saádu (2017) which revealed that the general students' knowledge of Arabic Language in University of Ilorin was relatively high. This is also in line with the finding of Awoniyi (2015) which revealed that students' performance is generally above average. The high performance of students in Arabic Language could be attributed to students' positive attitudes and their achievement motivation which also tend to be high.

The last finding revealed that there was a significant correlation among students' attitude, achievement motivation and academic performance in Arabic Language in Kwara State. Thus, the combination of the independent variables significantly predicted the dependent variable. However, students' achievement motivation was found to have the higher contribution to students' performance in Arabic Language than their attitude. This implies that achievement motivation is a more significant variable than attitude on academic performance of students in Arabic Language.

Implications:

It was concluded that students' achievement motivation was the stronger predictor between the two independent variables involved with the higher contribution than attitude on academic performance of students in Arabic Language. Below is the implication of the study:

1. Arabic teachers should make their instructions interesting to the students with relevant illustrations which could promote readiness for regular and steady learning and assist in developing positive attitudes in students towards the subjects.
2. Students need to be provided with feedback on their actions such as marking their scripts and reinforcing good responses to learn and develop internally generated motives in order to perform excellently in their academic endeavor.
3. School authorities should create a composed and conducive learning environment for students in order to encourage or motivate them to learn.
4. Curricular planners should formulate broad-based curriculum that would make students find studying Arabic Language interesting, not a theoretical curriculum without practical orientation.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it could be concluded that majority of the students were positively disposed to Arabic Language. Significant correlation existed among students' attitude, achievement motivation and academic performance in Arabic. Achievement motivation was the stronger predictor between the two independent variables involved with the higher contribution than attitude on academic performance of students in Arabic Language. Some other factors that were not captured in the study may also contribute to students' performance in Arabic Language.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are proffered;

1. Arabic teachers should make their instructions interesting to students with relevant illustrations which would promote readiness for regular and steady learning and assist in developing positive attitudes in students towards the subjects.
2. Students need to be provided with feedback on their actions such as marking their scripts and reinforcing good responses to learn and develop internally generated motives in order to perform excellently in their academic endeavor.

Limitations of the Study: This study made use of descriptive research of correlational type and structured questionnaire for data collection and limited to Kwara State.

Therefore, future researchers may increase the number of schools as well expand the locale. Researchers could also use more robust statistical tools for data analysis.

Acknowledgement: I appreciate all Arabic students, principals and staff members of the schools sampled for the study for their support and understanding while conducting the research. I equally appreciate the research assistants and Mr. Amidu Yusuf who put us through during the coding and analysis of the data collected.

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