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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The performance of students in Senior Secondary Sciences in Nigeria has remained an issue of concern to all stakeholders (Ajagun, 2000). The report by Ojerinde (1998) on the survey of the performance of candidates in Chemistry subjects in Nigeria over the years revealed a discernible decline. This perennial decline has remained a source of concern to Science educators and Chemistry educators (Nnaka and Anaekwe, 2004).

One of the major problems facing the educational system in Nigeria is the abysmal failure of students in public examinations, particularly at the secondary level of education. According to Uduh (2009), the high percentage of candidates who failed WASSCE yearly is reflected in the low percentage of the candidates that meets the university admission requirements. The situation is so pathetic that stakeholders keep on wondering why this level of education has persistently failed to meet the yearnings and aspirations of the society. Apart from the fact that the mass failure of students in public examinations constitutes wastage on investment in secondary education, it puts a big question mark on the quality of secondary education in the country. Each time the results of students in Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) are released, it has been a tale of woes and national embarrassment.

Despite the effort put in by government, and various stakeholders of education, Chemistry still remained one of the most difficult subjects in schools. There is a general impression that Chemistry is difficult by its very nature, and because of this impression, there is poor performance among junior secondary school students who are the focus of this study. This poor performance in Chemistry has been attributed to two broad factors which include: Hereditary and environmental factors which can be subdivided into students, home, teachers, and school factors (Ola, 1998).

However, students reason that Chemistry is highly structured and is so abstract and requires special intellectual attitude. Thus, students see the subject as something esoteric. Emenalo (1986) in Nwogu (1990) articulated the fact that inherent notion held by many Africans that Chemistry is a very difficult subject which is capable of making one "mad" is at the centre of the phobia which students exhibit for Chemistry and which has claimed many casualties over the years, Nwogu (1990:123), therefore poses the question: "how then would any person in fairness expect our poor and innocent children to be as courageous as to face something which is capable of making even an adult mad? The students would prefer to do something else no matter how difficult rather than to attend Chemistry classes.

Most parents do not play a crucial role in preparing their children for school. The child is expected to see the world from the perspective of these archaic values and the goodness

of otherwise of his behaviour is judged as such. Opposition from the child arises from what appears to him obsolete and defense of traditionalism by the parents. For example, Whaler (1997) argues that consistent and appropriate parental reactions to the full range of a child's response repertoire will establish a family context conducive to positive reinforcement of child compliance. In contrast, inconsistent parental reactions appear to create a chaotic family context conducive to the negative reinforcement of child opposition. He argues that based on these two forms of contexts, the parent and children seen to generate distinctive personal rules which outline the functions arrangements of contexts, behavior.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Perhaps not much attention has been given to the performance of students in secondary school Chemistry subject in recent years. This neglect, no doubt has relegated this Chemistry subject to the background in Secondary School Certificate Examination. A close look at the 2013/2014 SSCE result records, confirms that students' performance has been very poor generally and the increased number of school dropout in the area of study is a clear pointer of the theme.

According to Okpala (2010), poor performance in Secondary School Certificate Examination (WAEC) is caused by many factors such as; students ineffective study techniques, quality of teachers and method of teaching, the parents inability to provide useful materials like textbooks, exercise books and school fees and problem of inadequate instructional materials for teaching and learning of Chemistry in schools. This study therefore is designed to assess the factors associated with mass failure of Chemistry in Secondary School Certificate Examination.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study is to find out the factors associated with mass failure of student in Chemistry in Secondary Schools in KMC Local Government, Kano State. Specifically, the study sought to find out if:-

1. Insufficient numbers of qualified teachers affects students' mass failure in Chemistry subjects.
2. Unavailability of instructional materials for teaching of Chemistry subject affects students' mass failure in Chemistry subjects,
3. The previous socio-economic backgrounds of the students affect them in studying Chemistry subject.
4. The attitude and interest of students towards the nature of Chemistry subject contribute deeply to their mass failure in SSCE.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In assessing the purpose of the study, this research project will answer the following questions:

1. Does insufficient numbers of qualified Chemistry teachers affects students' mass failure in Chemistry subject?
2. Does unavailability of instructional materials for teaching of Chemistry subject affects students' mass failure in Chemistry subjects?

3. Does previous socio-economic background of the students affect them in studying Chemistry subject?

4. How would interest of students towards the nature of Chemistry subject contribute deeply to their mass failure in SSCE?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

In carrying out this research work the following theoretical statements are buttressed to serve as a direction on which the work will be premised:

1. H_0 : Insufficient numbers of qualified Chemistry teachers does not affect students' mass failure of students in Chemistry subject

H_1 : Insufficient numbers of qualified Chemistry teachers and instructional materials teaching affects Chemistry subject.

2. H_0 : There is no significant relationship between availability of instructional materials for teaching of Chemistry subject and students' mass failure in Chemistry subjects.

H_1 : There is significant relationship between availability of instructional materials for teaching of Chemistry subject and students' mass failure in Chemistry subjects.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The student will be able to appreciate the importance of the effective domain like interest and motivation in improving their performance. With this awareness, the student might put up a positive attitude towards Chemistry subject which will increase their performance and enhance higher grades in Secondary School Certificate Examination.

Teachers will also be able to adjust their teaching methods and offer remedial helps where they find out those students are putting up a low attitude. State Government will also see the need of guidance and counseling in each school, the ministry of education and curriculum planners for better organization of junior subjects in education.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study focused on factors associated with mass failure of student in Chemistry in Secondary Schools in KMC, Local Government. The study will be confined to five selected Secondary Schools in Education District II, KMC, Kano.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Education: Education in its general sense is a form of learning in which knowledge, skills, and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training or through research.

Failure: A person or thing that proves unsuccessful

Teacher: A teacher or school teacher is a person who provides education for students.

Education: Education in its general sense is a form of learning in which knowledge, skills, and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training or through research.

Student: A person who is studying at a university or other place of higher education.

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