

Analysis Of The Decline Of Geography In Nigerian Secondary Schools

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Abstract: Geography as a school subject is one of the most important subjects in senior secondary school education and it's relevant for students in their pursue of tertiary education cannot be over emphasizes. Geography equips with the understanding of its environment, because geography teaches man how to interact with his physical environment, so it therefore helps students to appreciate their environment better and the usefulness of the abundant resources in their environment. The research employed the use of secondary data that was gotten from the West Africa examination council of the number of student that registered and sat for the senior secondary school final exams in geography from 2003-2017. A correlation analysis was used to determine the level of relationship between the number of students that registered for the exams and the actual number of students that later sat for the exams, and trend analysis was used to check the trend in the numbers from 2003-2017. This was used to understand the reason for the decline in other to support or reject that the subject is actually in decline in Nigeria. From the results in this study, it was concluded that the relationship between the number of students that registered and sat for geography at WAEC within the year under review is statistically significant.

Keywords: Geography, WAEC, Nigerian secondary school.

I. INTRODUCTION

Geography as a school subject is one of the most important subjects in senior secondary school education and it's relevant for students in their pursue of tertiary education cannot be over emphasizes. Geography equips with the understanding of its environment, because geography teaches man how to interact with his physical environment, so it therefore helps students to appreciate their environment better and the usefulness of the abundant resources in their environment.

Geography is a subject that enables students to explore and understand the relationship between human beings and the earth through the study of space, place and environment (Yeng, 2009). It also a discipline that fosters learning across a wide range of natural science and social sciences disciplines and integrate them coherently under spatial and environmental paradigm (Viles and Rogers, 2003). Geography makes useful

contributions to the understanding and solution of numerous rapidly changing spatial and environmental issues in global, natural and local contexts like the shrinking of ice cover in the Arctic Ocean, rural-urban migration, climate change etc.

There are several scholarly articles that have been carried out to identify the causes, reasons, factors and solutions to the decline of geography in our senior secondary school. In the works of Amosun,(2016) "why Nigerian teachers scarcely and scanty teach map reading and why students are scared of it" contributed that the cause of decline in geography can be attributed to the failure to teach accurately map reading and drawing which was also supported by (Okwilagwe, 2012; Amosun, 2002; Anikwe, 2000). Another reason for the decline of geography in our schools was also raised by Aderogba, (2011) in her work "laboratories and sustainable teaching and learning about secondary school geography in Nigeria" that the lack of providing student with laboratories, geographical and meteorological gardens are not available in our schools

making the teaching of geography to be abstract in spite of several knowledge that will be gain by students and make the subject attractive (Aderogba, 2001, 2006, 2011).

The issue of not participating in field work by students of geography has also been identified as one of the reason the subject is on the decline. In the research of Amosun, (2016) “making secondary school come alive in Nigeria: a case for field work” discovered that fieldwork in geography in most of Nigeria secondary schools is awful both in quantity and quality, it appears the word ‘fieldwork’ has never been heard before resulting to the subject to be taught in isolation making student lose interest in the subject (Amosun, 1994; Awolusi, 2012; Falana, 2015). Another factor attributed to the decline of geography in our secondary school is attrition of the subject, in their work “factor influencing secondary school students’ attrition in geography in Esan local government area of Edo State” discovered that geography has been experiencing high level of attrition of students at the senior secondary certificate examination level in Nigeria, this is evident in the decline of registered student for geography over the years and their lack of interest in geography as a school subject (Akintade, 2011; Adeyemi, 2009; Olanipekun 1988) their findings shows student is not the main reason for the decline of geography but the inadequate numbers of geography teachers in our schools.

Despite the importance of geography to the country as it experience severe environmental challenges including drought, desert encroachment, natural disaster, climate change, poor waste management and loss of biodiversity which geography seeks to address. The subject has over the years attracted fewer students and the implication is what the research aim is to ascertain if the decline in student enrollment for geography in our senior secondary school is actually as the result of the afar mention causes or we are looking at the wrong reason for the decline. Also most of the researches only study part or some of Nigeria none has been able to carry out research on the entire country to be able to say the subject is on the decline. Thus, to achieve this aim, we are looking at the trend of the number of students that registered for WASCE June/July examination from 2003 to 2017.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research employed the use of secondary data that was gotten from the West Africa examination council of the number of student that registered and sat for the senior secondary school final exams in geography from 2003-2017. A correlation analysis was used to determine the level of relationship between the number of students that registered for the exams and the actual number of students that later sat for the exams, and trend analysis was used to check the trend in the numbers from 2003-2017. This was used to understand the reason for the decline in other to support or reject that the subject is actually in decline in Nigeria.

III. RESULT ANALYSIS

TREND ANALYSIS OF NUMBER OF REGISTERED STUDENT FOR WAEC BETWEEN 2003-2017

This study examine the changes in the number of students that have registered for geography as a subject at the WAEC since 2003 to 2017. The two numbers taken into consideration are the number of student who registered for the subject as against the number of students who eventually sat for the examination.

Year	Total Entry	Total Sat	Percentage Comparison
2003	592,634.00	548,116	92
2004	595,529.00	556,274	93.4
2005	618,372.00	573,475	92.73
2006	675,569.00	635,098	94
2007	734,141.00	694,750	94.63
2008	729,645.00	689,110	94.44
2009	786,271.00	747,877	95.12
2010	776,926.00	737,467	94.92
2011	903,885.00	863,032	95.48
2012	1,008,796.00	958,444	95.01
2013	992,882.00	957,578	96.44
2014	746,537.00	722,597	90.51
2015	752,503.00	736,914	91.19
2016	726,543.00	715,658	97.57
2017	727,268.00	717,582	97.93

Source: WAEC

Table 1: The percentage difference between registered and sat

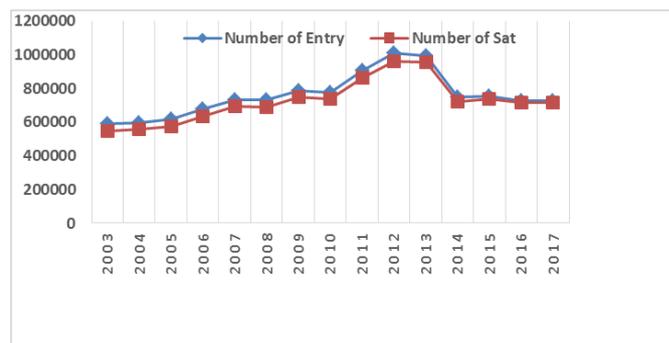


Figure 1: Trend analysis of students registered for geography at WAEC in Nigeria

From the chart above, the trend shows an increase in the number of students registered for geography from year 2003-2009, from year 2009 to 2010 there was a decrease in the number of registered students for geography before it later shot to a record high of over 1,000,000 registered students in the year 2012. The number of registered students dropped from 1,000,000 to 746,537 in the year 2014. Meanwhile the drop in the number of registered students for geography from the record high of over 1,000,000 in 2013 can be as a result of curriculum change in secondary school which brought about introduction of new subjects such as civic education, and all. Meanwhile we have to also be considerate about the increase in population in the country yearly which should correlate with the number of registered students. In this study, we will like to emphasize on the relationship between the number of

students that registered for this subject yearly and also the number of students that actually sat for the exams. Thus there is need to know the percentage difference between the number of students registered and the number that actually sat for it over the years under review. From year 2007 to 2009, there was 7.76% in the number of registered students for Geography in WASSCE.

To know the level of relationship between the number of students that registered for geography in WAEC and the number of students that actually sat for the examination, the correlation analysis was used.

Correlations			
		Number of entry	Number of sat
Number of entry	Pearson Correlation	1	.995**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
	N	15	15
Number of sat	Pearson Correlation	.995**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	
	N	15	15

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Source: SPSS

Table 2

From the result of correlation analysis above, the correlation coefficient for entry and sat is 0.995. The p-value for this correlation coefficient is 0.000.

The statistical hypothesis for this p-value is:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between Entry and Sat

H₁: There is significant relationship between Entry and sat.

Because $p < .05$, we reject null hypothesis and this concludes that the relationship is statistically significant.

It was shown that the r value=0.995, this implies that the two variables increases and decreases together. Thus, as the number of entry increases, so the number of sat. Also as the number of entry decreases, so the number of sat decreases as well. $r^2=0.995^2 = 0.990$.

Thus with the value of $r^2=0.99$, it implies that 99% of the variance is shared between both variables.

IV. CONCLUSION

Most of the literatures may be right in their findings for the decline of the subject in secondary schools across the country but this study has been able to identify that the population density of the country alongside the government policy on education by changing the senior secondary school curriculum delimiting geography as a non compulsory subject are factors that attributed to the sharp decline. Having said that the trend analysis show it's not that bad has it been made to look like, that geography is in drastic decline in our senior secondary school but proper policies should be quickly made to address the trend before it becomes alarming. Further

studies will be encouraged in this area to help the educational policy makers to see how geography as a subject that could bring out the country from its abysmal situation to a place of glory among countries of the world.

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