

Educational Attainment and Employment Status as Determinants of Cognitive Behaviours of Out-of-School Adolescents in Southwest, Nigeria

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Abstract:

The study examined educational attainment and employment status as determinants of cognitive behaviours of out-of-school adolescents in Southwest, Nigeria. The study specifically examined if level of educational attainment and employment status differentiate cognitive behaviours of out-of-school adolescents. The descriptive survey research design was adopted in this study. The population of the study consisted of out-of-school-adolescents, both male and female in Southwest Nigeria. The study sample of 1458 out-of-school-adolescents was selected using multistage sampling procedure. The research instrument used was a questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Cognitive Behaviours" (QCB) designed by the researcher. The instrument was validated before it was administered on the sampled respondents. The data collected were tested using inferential statistics of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed that level of educational attainment significantly differentiated in the cognitive behaviours of the out-of-school-adolescents. Out-of-school-adolescents with educational attainment of SSCE have the highest level of cognitive behaviour. The results however revealed that employment status does not significantly differentiate in the cognitive behaviours of out-of-school-adolescents. It was recommended that the government should establish free remedial schools for out-of-school adolescents who were unable to complete their Senior School Certificate Examination.

Keywords: Educational Attainment, Employment Status, Cognitive, Behaviour, Out-of-School-Adolescents,

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Introduction

Cognition is a psychological concept that explains how the human mental ability processes gained knowledge and understanding. These processes involve thinking, knowing, remembering, judging, and problem solving. Kendra (2019) observed that these processes of gaining knowledge and understanding operate at the higher level of intellectual functioning of the human brain which also includes planning. Cognitive behaviour in this study therefore refers to an individual's thinking style as it's relate to their emotions, feelings, and thinking which may be rational or irrational on issues they considers in their mind.

The human growth and development at the adolescent stage, appears characterized by evidently marked biological and psychological changes that may contribute positively or negatively to the built-up of their cognitive behaviour. Rachey (2018) also refers to cognitive behaviour as one's thinking pattern, and how he links ideas together to make his personal decisions, that is, how one's thought influences his behaviour and actions. Amyle (2018) observed in his study that the cognitive behaviour of some out-of-school-adolescents appear to be that of self-defeating, illogical reasoning, which may have generated emotional dysfunctions and lack of self-worth that may have influenced their decision to associate themselves with peers of deviant behaviours.

The level of educational attainment appears to be a factor that may have significant influence on the cognitive behaviour of adolescents because the primary aim of education is to prepare learners for effective life in the society. Ahmed (2016) opined that adolescents spend only about 7 to 8 hours in school learning or less than 30 percent, while 70 percent of their times are spent with parents and other family members at home learning core cultural values. However, based on survey, he affirmed that adolescents are more effectively influenced by the school which helps in developing their personality. Ayo (2018) succinctly affirmed, that education appears is our passport to the future, because tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today. The school appears has become a significant agent to inculcate educational values (such as nationalism, altruism, religious faith, and achievement motivation) and appears the best platform for out-of-school-adolescents to build their personal strength, personality, social skills, employment skills, empowerment, and self-identity. Being out of school, appears may make these skills unattainable.

It therefore appear that this population of out-of-school-adolescents who denied themselves of such learning make themselves fall prey to recruitment as political thugs, enlistment into insurgency, and militant groups – situations such as this, portray any nation as unsafe for economic investments. Ogunyemi (2019) succinctly observed that the increasing number of out-of-school-adolescents might have negative consequence on the nation's economy and her internal security.

This self-defeating cognitive behaviour among some out-of-school-adolescents appears vocationally challenging. It appears their low qualification has subjects them to low employment status. This low employment status appears a factor influencing their cognitive behaviour, especially when faced with employment challenges, entrepreneurship opportunities and the need for initiative and creative ideas for self-employment. The question often asked by these adolescents are where, what, when, and how to start the business of their own that will ensure their self-employment, self-sustainability, and their contribution to national development.

Their low employment status associated with low socio-economic challenges and self-defeating cognition appeared to have created a mindset that substitutes their interest and value for education in preference for quick and perhaps sudden wealth syndrome through



internet fraud. It also appears their preference for salary and work and perhaps interest and demand for higher wages despite being unskilled, untrained, un-credentialed appears another thinking error. Even artisans among them with small scale business sometimes had wished they could jettison their business for salary work instead of rebranding, repackaging, and repositioning their business for more profit.

However, Rannveig (2016) observed that occupation, vocation, and employment status and income appears closely associated with one's level of education, hence out-of-school-adolescents of upper secondary may work less and earn lower income than people with higher educational qualification. He also observed that the vocation/employment one engages in, may moderate the level of stress one experiences, hence out-of-school-adolescents are very much likely to perform the same physically burdensome labour than people holding higher qualification, and their world view and thinking may not be irrational on national consciousness.

In view of the above, the study examined if level of educational attainment and employment status differentiate cognitive behaviours of out-of-school adolescents.

The null hypotheses below were postulated for this study;

1. Level of educational attainment will not significantly differentiate in the cognitive behaviours of the out-of-school-adolescents.
2. Employment status will not significantly differentiate in the cognitive behaviours of out-of-school-adolescents.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted in this study. The population of the study consisted of out-of-school-adolescents, both male and female in Southwest Nigeria. The study sample of 1458 out-of-school-adolescents was selected using multistage sampling procedure. The research instrument used was a questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Cognitive Behaviours" (QCB) designed by the researcher. Face and content validity of the instrument were ensured by experts in Guidance and Counselling, Educational Psychology, and Tests and Measurement. The experts thereafter adjudged the instrument valid. The reliability of this instrument was subjected to internal consistency method. To achieve this, fifty copies of the instrument were administered at Kwara state on 50 respondents that are not part of the sample for the study. The scores obtained were analysed using Cronbach Alpha statistics and it yielded reliability coefficient value of 0.818.

The data of the study were collected and collated by the researchers after the administration of the questionnaire. The researchers with the help of trained research assistants ensured administration of the questionnaire. The responses obtained were collated and analysed using inferential statistics. The hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis 1: Level of educational attainment will not significantly differentiate in the cognitive behaviours of the out-of-school-adolescents.

In order to test the hypothesis, data on cognitive behaviour were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section B of QCB (item 1 – 40) in the questionnaire. Analysis of Variance was used to compute difference in cognitive behaviour of out-of-school-adolescents based on their level of educational attainment. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for difference in cognitive behaviours of the out-of-school-adolescents based on their level of educational attainment

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	980.703	2	490.352	11.837*	0.000
Within Groups	60272.306	1455	41.424		
Total	61253.010	1457			

*P < 0.05

The result presented in Table 1 shows that F-cal value of 11.837 was significant because the P value (0.000) < 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that level of educational attainment significantly differentiated in the cognitive behaviours of the out-of-school-adolescents. In order to investigate the source of the differences observed, Post – hoc analysis (Scheffe) with mean difference was carried out in Table 2.

Table 2: Scheffe Post – hoc Test and Mean for observed differences in cognitive behaviours of the out-of-school-adolescents based on their level of educational attainment

Groups	N	Mean	1	2	3
			102.59	102.54	104.58
Primary 6 (1)	418	102.59			
JSCE (2)	739	102.54			
SSCE (3)	301	104.58	*	*	

* P < 0.05

In Table 2, significant difference were found in cognitive behaviour of out-of-school-adolescents with educational attainment of Primary 6 and SSCE in favour of those with SSCE; and those with educational attainment of JSCE and SSCE in favour of those with SSCE. There was however no significant difference in cognitive behaviour of out-of-school-adolescents with educational attainment of Primary 6 and JSCE. It can be deduced from the findings that out-of-school-adolescents with educational attainment of SSCE have the highest level of cognitive behaviour.

Hypothesis 2: Employment status will not significantly differentiate in the cognitive behaviours of out-of-school-adolescents

In order to test the hypothesis, data on cognitive behaviour were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section B of QCB (item 1 – 40) in the questionnaire. t-test was used to compute difference in cognitive behaviour between working and not working out-of-school-adolescents. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: t-test Analysis for difference in cognitive behaviours of out-of-school-adolescents based on their employment status

Variations	N	Mean	SD	df	t _{cal}	P
Working	897	102.92	6.54	1456	0.395	0.693
Not Working	561	103.06	6.40			

P>0.05

Table 3 shows that the t-cal value of 0.395 was not significant because the P value (0.693) > 0.05. This implies that null hypothesis was not rejected. Hence, the cognitive behaviours of out-of-school-adolescents in Southwest Nigeria was not significantly differentiated by their employment status.

Discussion

The result revealed that level of educational attainment significantly differentiated in the cognitive behaviours of the out-of-school-adolescents. Out-of-school-adolescents with educational attainment of SSCE have the highest level of cognitive behaviour. Greeta and Mudita (2016) reported that value education programme has positive effect on promoting nationalism among in-school adolescents as against adolescents not in school who may not have the opportunity for such education. Sabadra (2017) reported the fading spirit of nationalism among out-of-school-adolescents.

It was revealed that employment status does not significantly differentiate in the cognitive behaviours of out-of-school-adolescents. Greeta and Mudita (2016) revealed that work status has no influence on counselling needs of out-of-school adolescents.

Conclusion

It was concluded that out-of-school-adolescents with educational attainment of SSCE have the highest level of cognitive behaviour while employment status has no influence on cognitive behaviours of out-of-school-adolescents. It is recommended that the government should establish free remedial schools for out-of-school adolescents who were unable to complete their Senior School Certificate Examination.

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