

Research article

Determination of Academic Achievements and Students Records through Less Competitive Variables: the myth and realities in Tertiary Institutions.

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Abstract

Purpose/Aims:

This study is a sequel to a previous study on ensuring quality in academic assessments of students works and the impact on students' academic records which was published in the international journal of scientific research in education {ijsre.com) in the month of March 2013, vol.6 (1)1-8. It is a validation of issues raised in the previous studies published in the above named journal. The current study investigated the influence of certain non- meritocratic variables (NMVs) on academic achievements and the final academic records of students in tertiary institutions as an overriding objective.

Methodology/Procedure: two tertiary institutions in Ghana were randomly selected for the study.

A total population of 740 final year students constituted the sample population from the two tertiary institutions. The study employed close ended survey instruments with likert-type rating scale to sample 450 students, but only retrieved 427 of the instruments out of 450 distributed. The retrieval rate stands at 94.89%. The data was analysed under descriptive statistics in conjunction with the bootstrap measuring scale focussing on mean ages of the study participants.

Results/conclusion: the study found out that the truism of most students' academic achievements and authenticities of their final records have been compromised through the influence of some contentious and less competitive variables which have been discussed in the study. The influence of non-meritocratic variables discussed in the study do not only compromise the true state of students achievements and their records but also

induces indecency and mediocrity among the products from the current crop of higher institutions of learning who becomes the future leaders and labour force in their respective home countries and communities. **Recommendations:** the study recommends among others strict adherence to the best professional practices and academic efficacy among practitioners and students as well. Parents, students, politicians and stakeholders of both public and private tertiary institutions especially, should desist from exerting undue pressures, either directly or indirectly on teachers and school authorities to determine success of students who have recorded abysmal test scores and other academic performance processes since this tantamount arguably to corruption and a long term effects among graduates in the work place and in society in general. People who achieve their academic success through corrupt practices see nothing wrong when engaging in immoral behaviours and other negative practices in society irrespective of their position or when they become a public figure in not too distant future.

KEY WORDS: Academic, achievement, myth, reality, ethnocentrism, tribalism, ethnicity, halo-effects, realism, religious cohesion and bootstrap measures. Protocol considerations.

Introduction

Academic achievements and relationship with students' final records in higher educational institutions have not received adequate empirical investigation among information scientists and quality assurance researchers in recent times.(Azameti and Adjei2013) However, what has been the popular knowledge among social and cognitive psychologists and educational researchers about determination of academic achievements among students focuses on cultural factors in education, social policy, social capital and the extent to which these independents variables influence academic achievements of students in schools and colleges .Among the most popularly asked questions include why cultural factors such as beliefs, attitudes and practices including social relationships which distinguish students of one culture from others account for achievements of students? How do connections between students and their peers and teachers; including the perceptions among teachers and school principals or heads of institutions about students affect academic achievements? Conclusions drew from these earlier studies indicate that academic achievements of students are tied closely to social and cultural factors operating within each society. Relying on indigenous beliefs, attitudes and practices as well as those borrowed from other cultures and information obtained in studies comparing different societies that is of local as well as more universal significance. Thus, the ultimate goal of attempting to understand antecedents and correlates of academic achievements requires familiarity with practices that lie both within and among cultures. These areas of investigation have been of significant interest among some social science researchers over the years.

According to Stevenson and Stigler (1992), these areas have been of great interest due to what can be learned about the researchers own culture. By placing practices from one culture in juxtaposition with those from other cultures, every day events which were once considered novelty or unique becomes common practices. For instance a five year old child in African culture may differ in his or her orientation on mathematical concepts as compared to a child of the same age within a European culture. A college student from African descent may have different orientation on reporting causes of road accidents and loss of human lives from a student from an American culture giving report on the same incident. Proposing cultural factors to account for such differences in academic achievements led to new perceptions about cognitive abilities of students in all levels of education and how cultures differ at explanation of achievements among people in educational institutions. (Paris and Wellman1998)

Another contribution of comparative studies about academic achievement is to explain the characteristics of different systems of education, what may be considered as a norm in terms of academic achievement processes which can be regarded as exciting, innovative and acceptable may be unacceptable among members of another culture. Again, what may be considered as positive social capital or social relationships between students and the school systems which determines academic success may also differ from other systems. As results of such discoveries, comparative studies about academic achievements have received much attention since the 1970s (Beatin et al 1996),(Martin et al, 1997, Coleman [1998], Clifton 1997) and (Etcheverry, Clifton and Roberts 2001). The results from these previous studies have shown that there are glimpses of positive correlation between social factors and academic achievements. [Stevenson and Lee1998].Mathew.(2013),has also found that by far majority of person's success in life is attributable to social ,emotional and intelligent variables. According to him general intelligent and building of connections which uniquely predict objective and subjective academic achievements. Despite these earlier findings there are major knowledge gaps in these areas

of study, for example, practitioner's inability to scrutinize the methodological approach and its accuracy and the result, reliability and generalizability of the studies.

Studies and experiences among practitioners in contemporary tertiary institutions show that there are other variables which fall within the socio- cultural domains that are subjects of empirical investigation but have not been considered significantly by the earlier researchers in the field. It is useful at this juncture to further expand the scope of investigation to include the perceived related variables besides the methodological knowledge gaps which presumably might have adequately influenced academic achievements and students records in several academic institutions over the years and even to date. Bringing these problems to the fore must be seen as one of the most important efforts to succinctly ensure quality enhancement in post teaching and learning activities in today's tertiary education.

The Problem Statement

A genuinely achieved academic success among students in tertiary institutions and the authenticity of their academic records are becoming subjects of intense empirical study among social science researchers in recent times. For instance, Azameti and Adjei (2013) contend in their earlier studies that the assessment processes of students' work in tertiary institutions nowadays are being compromised through the influence of what they have termed as less competitive variables and academic in- efficacy among practitioners. In many of the emerging private and public tertiary institutions in Ghana today and other developing countries for instance, there have been a myriad of irregularities. These are particularly associated with the conduct of post teaching and learning activities and other assessment procedures. The most critical aspect of the challenges include management of academic records that seem to confirm the practical realities about allegations of misconduct among both teachers and students and the extent to which this truncates a genuinely academic achievement among students and their final records in many tertiary institutions not only in Ghana but other nations of the world. Among the most commonly perceived factors to have influenced decisions and actions in educational assessment processes are protocol considerations, tribal sentiments and its associated considerations, halo effects from students perspective and as well as teachers, gender and religious cohesions, political, material and monetary gifts from students and parents. These areas have indeed increased the scope of empirical studies into socio-cultural factors such as beliefs, attitudes, social capital in the determination of academic success among students which has been mentioned earlier in this study. By and large, these issues are very contentious in nature and are usually frowned upon by many people when tabled for open discussion in academic circles not only in Africa but also in many other parts of the world. People who have been levelled with such allegations in academic institutions more often than not vehemently denied any involvement in such wrong doings to the utter dismay and disbelief of everybody. Such blatant denial of wrong doings in human organisations confirms an African proverbial saying among the Ewes that though dogs do mating in the open at the full glare of the human eye, yet they never do same when giving birth. What this implies is that the reality of academic success of individuals is not what one can see at the periphery level; there are more to it than what the eye can see or the ear can hear.

Despite this contentious nature of these variables, the reality of its influence in the determination of academic achievement and academic records created in human organisations such as educational institutions can't be denied outright when practitioners want to be true to themselves. One must also not forget the popular saying that there is no smoke without fire.

Studies have shown that the ubiquitous usage of technology in educational service delivery and management in this paradigm have exacerbated academic improprieties among both students and lecturers in many educational institutions at the global stage with the worst case scenarios in Europe, the US including the far Eastern nations or countries in transitions as they are being popularly called. It is against this background and others that this study sought to investigate the extent to which the aforementioned less competitive variables influence the decision making and actions and of non-meritocratic engagements of students during the determination of academic achievements among students and its proximate effects on academic ' records not only in Ghana but also other nations of the world.

The Objectives of the Study

The general objective is to investigate the degree to which non-competitive social factors affect academic achievements among students in higher education.

The central questions which the paper sought to address are:

- To what extent have tribal sentiments among teachers and administrators influence academic success of students?
- How do gender considerations affect students' academic success?
- Do religious cohesion and other social connections among teachers and students influence academic success?
- To what extent can incidence of halo-effects influence practitioner's decision during assessment of students work to determine their achievement?
- To what extent can the factors mentioned affects academic records of students?

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The study was guided by four main theories which are the social capital theory, critical realism theory, general systems theories and a normative or role concept. Explanations of academic achievement like most human activities are naturally multifaceted.

According to Pena (2007) theories formulated to explain academic success encompasses various dimensions of students' interactions with peers, practitioners and the general social and the academic systems. Social capital generally refers to the networks and relationships which encourages trust and reciprocity which shapes the quality and quantity of human society and social interactions. Social capital serves as insurance for the less academically endowed students in many educational institutions. This can be considered as both positive and negative capitals. The positive social capital in education institutions manifest in such areas as teachers being committed to the welfare of students in all areas of their school life which results into highest test scores; or in schools where facilities are better used, in communities where parents and the school take an active interest in the educational well-being of their students.

However, the down side of social capital which is the negative social capital in academic environments according to Putnam (1989) manifest among students through cheating and deliberate alteration of their recorded information and colluding with peers to achieve their academic success through negative practices. Among practitioners and students negative social capital are instance where under hand dealings are initiated in several ways which determine academic success but compromises the truism of final outcomes and the authentic of records at the long run.

Archer (1998) contends that the critical realism concept explains how different knowledge or epistemologies differ from being or ontology. The theory explains that there is a reality which exists independent of its human conception. Individuals who professed to be critical realists hold the belief that there are unobserved events which cause the ones which are observed or can be observed. Due to this concept, the social world or human societies can be understood only if people understand the structures that generate such observable events. The critical realism principle explains the experimental context of knowledge acquisition particularly in the realms of individual's roles performance in academic environments. Quality teaching and effective assessment which comes as a result of teacher efficacy and effective learning by the students leads to high academic achievement. These explain the observable and unobservable factors in the determination of academic achievement among students.

The critical realism theory also explains series of activities which takes place behind the scene between students and their peers and with practitioners which are considered negative but result into the final achievements of the students. What most probably account for the unobservable factors in the determination of success of students or any and events are things which take place behind the scene with the intent to truncate the reality of the situation.

In academic circles particularly among the African race, issues such as tribalism, ethnicity, religious cohesion, gender, halo- effects, material and money sometimes rear their ugly heads to determine success of some people and the outcome of certain events. This happens among students apart from the usual protocol considerations which are extended by the academic board or stakeholders to students whose test scores fall just a little below the pass mark. Such activities happen either during departmental moderation of end of semester examinations questions and results of various programmes which are being put together by the institution for graduation purposes.

The final achievements and records of students with the inherent inaccuracies and some deliberate human exigencies have indeed given room for analysis of myth and reality of academic success among students in all levels of education beyond margin of error. To say that these do not make the realization of quality control, quality assurance and the enhancement concepts in practical educational service delivery as such an arduous, ineffective and illusive concept in all ramifications is an understatement.

The System Theory

The concept holds that an organization is a managed system which encourages openness for easy flow of information and interdependence between people. The extension of this theory explains the point in this study that misconduct associated with academic assessment among practitioners and that of students themselves in respect of such inputs as reliance on tribal and other less competitive variables give rise to the achievements of students and final records thereby making the records inauthentic. Research has shown that a system can be said to consist of elements, thus the object-the parts or variables within the system. This may be physical or abstract or both depending upon the nature of the system. The systems consist of attributes-the qualities or the properties of the system and its objects. The systems exist in an environment. A system is then a set of things that affect one another within environments and form a larger pattern that is different from any other parts or the original individual constituent parts. The fundamental systems –interactive paradigm of organizational analysis features the constant stages of input, through put, and output being the final achievement of students and their records which demonstrates the concept of openness. The final achievements of students in higher education constitute the output as a result of varied activities, both positive and negative in the system which is the school.

The Roles Concept

The concept of a role in human affairs is widely used in the study of organizations, families and many other human activities. As a term which evolved from normative literature and especially drama, people are conceptualized as actors following a script in performing to audience that recognizes norms and evaluates the turn of events. Sociologists and psychologists confirm from their observations of people's foresight and calculations that come into play as people both take up roles and create roles. In coping with recurring problems of human existence, most people anticipate the consequences of their behaviour as they draw upon funds of social knowledge, or customs handed down through family or culture as they assess what is workable in a given situation and the impression they are likely to make. The most common place statements concerning family responsibilities describes and prescribes the complementary roles of parents and children, it is not possible to speak of one without implying the presences of the other. The parameters of a role, for example a specific profession may clearly defined, printed rules establish the demeanour. Tribal sentiment, segregation, and nepotism emerged through roles and functions of people which may not have been known easily on the periphery levels. Much of the human social behaviour is assumed to take place through the imitation of roles and functions. This leads to a level of conformity- note, the possibility that people may live according to an extreme version of stereotype of their roles. It is by playing roles that individuals covet thoughts and diabolic plans become overt or emerged, people settle personal scores sometimes through role play in the work place or during any events which provides an opportunity(www.wikipedia article April 19th 2013).

Literature Review

Wetzel and Cal-worth (1997) were of the view that social experiences of students shape their attitudes towards academic work. Their motivation to engage in learning activities and their determination to apply themselves to the demands of academic work are shape by social connections as well. However, little is known between scholars and the social environment and academic performance especially in the Ghanaian situation. Unlike Kenya where studies have examined and analysed the effects of textbooks and other material incentives on academic achievements. Among the researchers on factors which influence academic performance are Glewire et al (2007, Kremer et al 2007), and Mudege et al (2008). These writers indicate that neighbourhood violence and socio-economic status all go a long way to impact on academic achievement among students. Furthermore, Onsomus et al 2008, Hungi and Thuku 2010, Duflo and colleagues [2009] also examined the impact of peer academic performance. This was in a randomized evaluation of a tracking system and it was found that higher achieving students maintained their higher performance while low achieving students indirectly benefits from tracking through their teachers teaching at a level more appropriate to their students. Moulas (2010) in the study of 8th grade students in one of the districts- (Macrakos) in Kenya found that studies motivation for academic achievement was associated with home background such as parental socio-economic status. These studies

confirm the influence of both internal and external factors on the academic achievement of students in all types of academic institutions. Many of the factors influencing the achievement of students from the positive and negative sides equally affect the final records of students. Yet these have not been considered in general studies about academic success in the school systems. The studies conducted by Bourdieu (1996) and Coleman (1988) on social capital in education have shown that shared values and reciprocity in the area of respect, responsibility, trust, honesty and commitment in social relation in schools affect academic achievements.

According to Coleman (1990) the social interactions which exist between the individuals including stakeholders generate collective good which affects the academic success of people. Again, schools that build relationships grounded on high quality interpersonal relationships and supports teaching and learning facilitate academic success (Goddard 2003) and (Goddard et al 2001). Studies have shown that the effects of harnessing social skills within the classroom for instance in the use of comparative learning techniques and skills that sustain students' engagement are significantly associated to learning outcomes (Gibbs 1995).

Besides, studies have demonstrated that parental involvement in social activities and their children's academic work is positively associated with academic achievement (Horrat Weinnger and Largeau (2003); Adams and Christens (2000), Adams and Christens (1998); Hosui Chu and Wilms 1996). Further studies on parental socio-economic status which include family size, family structures and psychological status of the home environment such as the quality of parents-child relationships, parental expectations and support, impact academic success of the children all supported social factors in academic success of students.

In contrast, factors such as school spending on quality of physical infrastructure and human resources class size and school family communication are positively correlated with academic success. At the community level, factors such as good neighbourhood, community investment in school programmes such as what pertains in the western region of Ghana where the Ghana Robber Estimate Company Limited sponsors vacation classes for all basic school children in some of the villages: this has significantly affect academic performance of students. Several of such success stories have been shown in the media in Ghana in many forums in recent times.

Residential stability and ethnic diversity have also been found to be associated with academic achievement (Ainsworth, E. S. 2002, Coleman 1998). At the larger aggregate level countries economic status, gender socialization. Kingship structures and other cultural factors potentially explain differences in academic success. Heyneman, S.P. and Loxley (1983) spoke about the influence of social capital in various forms which affect academic success of many students. Bryke and Schneider (2000, 2001), Putnam (1990), Poites (1998, Coleman 1998 and Bandona 1986) have shared their knowledge on social capital which affect academic achievements of students either negatively or positively.

Concepts of Myth and Reality

The Concept of Myth: The word myth is derived from the Greek word mythos, which means a traditional tale common to the number of a tribe or a nation. It also means speech or discourse but which later came to mean fable or legend. It usually involves the natural phenomenon in bold imaginative terms.

Today myth has become a buzz word or one of the most prominent terms in contemporary literary analysis. Writers have always been attracted to elements of remoteness, mystery and the heroism of myth. [Northrop, F. Robert, Francis, F.1998]. The application of the term myth is very wide as there is a large variety of application by contemporary critiques.

In this study, the word myth is being used as assumptions regarding variables such as tribal sentiments, gender, halo-effects, and other less competitive variables which are perceived to be influencing decisions of some practitioners during academic assessment of students work and other non-meritocratic tendencies among students to achieve their success.

It has long been observed that in African societies belonging to a tribe or having your tribesman in charge of an organization provides a kind of safety net for people of the same tribe. It exists in politics, religions, organisations, and educational institutions and in almost every human organization especially in black Africa. It is a common practice among business people in the far Eastern nations including the Arabian Peninsula among the fanatics and defenders of religious aberrations.

The Concept of Reality: As matter of emphasis, the overriding objective of this study once again was to determine the reality of factors which were considered as less competitive as earlier mentioned to influence academic achievement processes in educational institutions. What then is reality? The word reality has been defined in the Cambridge International Dictionary of English as the state of things as they are imagined to be. [pp1180]. In wider definitions reality includes everything that is and has been whether or not it is observed or comprehensible.

Reality is often contrasted with what is imaginary, delusional, only in the mind, dreams, what is false, fiction or what is abstract. The contextual discussions of the term reality here is that academic achievement has an approved method which is based on the concept of meritocracy. However, due to human exigencies, the genuinely achieved academic success has been compromised in many respects which make the acceptance of its reality questionable.

It is quite conspicuous in almost every educational institution of every nation of the world where experiences and empirical studies show that with the emergence of ubiquitous application of computer technology and internet in educational service delivery there has been an uncontrollable increase in examination malpractices which affects credibility of academic achievement of students in all areas of study. This is possible when there is lack of security measures to forestall acts of improprieties among students in the midst of the general fallen standards of education globally.

There is an inordinate desire among students to attain higher standards in education yet some are not at all prepared to study harder and try to use everything humanly possible to achieve the expected success in their education.

Ethnocentric as a Normative Concept

The term ethnocentric is defined in the Cambridge International Dictionary of English as a belief of people that their customs and traditions or race and nationality are better than that of other people. Ethnocentrism was created by William, Sumner in 1998, after observing the tendency for people to differentiate between in-group and others. He used the term as a technical name for the view of things in which one's group is the centre of everything and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it. He further characterized it as often leading to pride, vanity, beliefs, of one's own culture is of superiority and contempt of outsiders. Robert Merton, [1989] comments that earlier study by Sumner robbed the concept of some analytical power because centrality and superiority are often correlated but need to be kept analytically distinct. Anthropologists, Franz and Bronislaw Malinowski argued that any human science had to transcend the ethnocentrism of the scientists. Personal observation indicates that tribal and ethnocentric sentiments play a major role in the determination of success and final achievement of people. In cultural plurality and ethnic diverse societies there are always natural bonds which are generated by these adhesive forces thereby differentiating one group from others. This has further resulted into acts of segregation, nepotism and bigotry in many human organizations including educational institutions where people belong to diverse cultural groups and tribes. Interestingly civilization and expounded modern technology in which ever field of human endeavour have never brought an end to negative tendencies and sentiments which distinguish one group of people from others even in religious organisations not only in sub-Saharan Africa but also in the world's advanced economies at the global stage.

The Relationship between Students Records and Academic Achievements

Students records are the aggregation of information documented on behalf of students in academic environments, it comprises of bio data, examinations grades and other vital information. The notable among these are the series of test scores and corresponding grades culminating into final grade point average which is closely related link with activities both positive and negative during the teaching and learning process. The processes leading to achievements of students are such a complex situations involving covert and overt activities giving rooms for margin of error sometimes to the extent that quality assurance is compromised along the line. It therefore implies that the final successes of students and their records are also the reflection of the activities that took place in the learning process and the two are inseparable per the systems concept of managing human organizations.

Methodology

The study's population was made up of 450 male and female final year students in two tertiary institutions outside Accra-Ghana. A total of 427 were sampled using structured and non-structured research instruments. The retrieval rate stands at 94.89%. The total of male students who participated in the study were 256, representing 62.4% and the female were 154, representing 37.6% respectively.

The cross sectional survey instrument employed for the data collection consisted of 8 question items, each of which had four points' likert type rating scales: strongly agree (4points), agree (3points), disagree (2points) and strongly disagree (1point). A stratified sampling technique was also used with descriptive study design. This was based on opinions, attitudes, age, gender, educational status, perceptions and experiences of the respondents which constitute the study. The major aim was to find out the extent to which the study participants supported or otherwise the influence of the 8 question items considered being less competitive which consequently influence academic achievement and final records of students in today's tertiary institutions. These include tribal and ethnic sentiment, gender influence, and halo-effects with male and female students, religious and secrete association feelings and influence all of which are never spoken in words but manifest in our actions and deeds.

Results and Discussion of Social Variables Related to Academic Achievements

Ethnic/tribal considerations on part of practitioners and students have been conceptualized as non-competitive variables in the determination of academic success of some students in tertiary institution. Others in the poll are religious cohesion, halo -effects, political and protocol considerations.

Table 1.0 below presents a cross tabulated results based on Bootstrap Directional measures about the views of male and female students in two tertiary institutions with regards to the variables: ethnicity/tribal/Hallo Effects/Religious cohesion, secrete society membership and their influence on academic achievements & Records of students.

Variables	N = 427	S/A	Agree	D/A	S/D	UD
Tribal/ethnicity	Count of Respondents	18	20	21	13	5
	Average age	21.5yrs.				
Halo effects	Number of Respondents	25	18	14	16	0
	Average age	19.6yrs.				
Gender influence.	Number of Respondents	28	10	8	0	0
	Average age.	37.5 yrs.				
Religious cohesion	Number of Respondents	20	10	2	0	0
	Average age.	45.5yrs.				
Membership in a secrete society	Number of Respondents	14	5	2	7	0
	Average age.	53.5yrs.	0	0	0	0
Effects on academic Records	Number of Respondents	43	39	47	35	5
	TOTAL	Number of Respondents on each variable stated in the table	148	102	96	71

Discussion of the Study Results

The average age of Study Participants is the Focus of Discussion of the Findings

A total of 427 students were randomly selected out of 450 final students from two departments in two tertiary institutions in the Greater Accra and one in the Volta region of Ghana. Putting together, makes 720 students as the total population of the final years students in the study institutions. The aim was to solicit their views on non-academic variables such as ethnic or tribal sentiments among practitioners, halo-effects, gender, being a member of secret societies or devotees to some deities and religious cohesion among members of an academic institution. Protocol considerations of authorities and other social connections influencing individual and collective decisions during assessments were also included in the less competitive variables discussed in the study. These variables were perceived to be closely correlated with final academic success of students and their records in many tertiary institutions in Africa; if not the whole world.

The 18 students, representing 42.15% out of a total sample population of 427 shown in the above table attest to the fact that tribal or ethnic sentiments among practitioners strongly influences academic success of some students. This group of study participants also represent 12.2 % of the 148 subtotals of the study of the sample population who have agreed strongly to all the aforementioned variables under discussion. Besides there were 4.7% of the respondents within the sample population category and as well as 19.6% respectively of the total sample population and the 102 total students indicated in the table that have affirmed the reality of the variables influencing practitioners assessment decision making processes in academic environments. These results were however, confirmed in the popular cultural value systems that exist in African societies. Belonging to a tribe or clan systems provide a safety net among people of the same tribe or bearers of the same clan symbols when happen to find themselves in one social settings and business circles. The reality of it in politics exists in the situation where African president may decide to appoint a minister of defence from his own tribe or from his/her local area or home town for obvious reasons. In the educational institutions appointment into some sensitive positions are influenced by tribal and ethnic considerations or sentiments. You can easily guess correctly the tribe which a deputy Director of a Faculty belongs to if you know the tribe of the superior officer.

Sometimes these tribal directional leadership and management style in African environments affects productivity and service delivery. Such subordinates when working with their cronies and tribes men or women on the top positions of the organisation becomes untouchable. They become secret informants, in other words, CIAS and CIDS in the work environments. This rather becomes counterproductive since human beings by nature will not put up their best in an organization where there is lack of freedom of speech and association. The story is the same in tertiary institutions in many African nations where tribal and social relations become the deciding factor for academic success of some students. There are in all, 77 students who agreed to issues of tribalism as motivation for academic success, they fall within an average age of 21.5 years. This age category of respondents form the bulk of tertiary students in many societies of the world, they are the technology generation and with different orientations on matters which may be considered as sensitive or contentious. They present their views on issues as frankly as possible regardless of the aftermath. Besides, there are another sub- total of 72 students who have an average age of 19.5years who also attest to influence of halo-effects on academic success of some students, this is follow by issues relating to gender, a total of 46 students with an average age of 37.5years who are strongly in support of gender influence of academic successes in tertiary institutions. The last but not the least are variables such as religious cohesion and secret society membership in African communities. With these another subtotal of 32 student whose average age is 45.5 years were in favour of religion and motivation for academic success and 28 of them with an average of 53.5years supporting membership in cults as motivation for academic achievements of some students.

Within the social capital conceptualisation, it is a known phenomenon that many individuals in societies including students in academic institutions try to achieve their academic success based on social capital which may be positive or negative that provides considerable proximate chance for its application either directly or inadvertently. The ethnic or tribal influences in academic or business circles are usually contentious issues and people wish to tread consciously when discussing issues related to individuals or group of people which bothers on such factors.

As much as society agree upon social cohesion which easily influence peoples sense of judgement and decision making processes on matters dear to them, to openly discuss such matters in reference to the variables in question require lots of carefulness in discussions. This is because many people frown upon open discussions of such matters. It applies also to people who have aberrations regarding religious beliefs or devotees of a

particular deity. No matter how people may try to denounce the existence of social considerations in individual academic success or any other achievement for the sake of being contentious an issue, their very presence cannot be refuted when society want to face the reality of our existence as human beings. We are fallible and erring despite our claim of perfection and chastity. People who are fastidious and dogmatic may advocate for the status quo but one cannot rule out when it comes to social cohesion which provides a strong bond of friendship and safety net for individuals according to Kuznets and Putnam (1984, 2004).

Besides, 20 of the respondents from both institutions with average of 17.8years were equally of the views that ethnic considerations influence academic achievements. Furthermore, 21 with average ages of 21.4 and 23.4 years respectively also indicates that the social variable under discussion contribute significantly to the academic success of students. The average age of the respondents who support strongly the influence of ethnic/tribal consideration equals to that of first group of respondents. These results implies that almost all the students who are young adults have no resentments of pointing out the existence of such less competitive measures as determination of academic achievements among students. However, it has been noted interestingly that among the study participants those who falls within the average age of 53.2 years in both institutions only agreed partially to the issue of ethnicity or tribalism influencing educational attainment of some students. These responses can be explained in the context of social psychology, socio cultural and cognitive perspectives. Studies show that cognitive and social maturity of individuals in normal circumstances form parts of factors through which people make important decisions about matters dear to their hearts or of mutual interest.

Our answers become selective and evasive depending on the situation at hand. As earlier mentioned, issues of tribalism and ethnocentrism are highly contentious, especially in academic circles within the African settings. Even though they exist in our body politics, business, and social circles and as well as in educational institutions, people prefer not to talk about them openly and prefer to keep it at bay if possible. It is very amazing that those who perpetrate these acts are the ones who do not want open discussion on them. This hypocritical attitude seems to be common among the African race where tribal diversity abounds and have contributed positively and negatively to our social cohesion and good neighbourliness. It is sometimes the proximate cause of civil strikes and wars with its concomitant hardships and loss of innocent lives of women and children which we have been witnessing all over the place in almost every year. The worst case scenario especially in academic institutions is that, it breeds mediocrity which affects the future labour force for the nations' productivity, and a wide spread corruption [corruption galore]. What seems as other significant responses of these results are 43 of the students, representing 0.23% strongly agreed, followed by 39, representing 9.13% agreed and with 47 also representing 11.01% strongly disagreed. People are entitled to their opinions on issues as far as individualism exist as part of organic societies of the human race which the concept of taxonomy in physical anthropology explains.

Concluding Summary

The paper reviewed and discussed some social variables which were considered to be less competitive in the determination of academic achievements and final records of students in higher education in Ghana. Previous studies in this areas, (Dreher and Ash 1990, Fagenson, 1989, Kram 1985, Queen 1994 and Rice and Brown, 1990) dwelled largely on the positive results of mentorship and protégé relationships between students and practitioners which the current study alluded to in discussion of the variables such as ethnicity or tribal influences on students achievement which is the focus of the discussion.

Gender and ethnicity for instance have received considerable discussion in the mentoring literature. It has been suggested that mentoring effects may be improved by gender matching (Fitt and Newton, 1981). The perception of shared values, experiences and networks as explained in the social capital concepts may encourage the development of bonds between mentors and people of the same gender. In reference to these assumptions by previous studies, this paper also found that there is close relationships between tribal/ethnic sentiment among practitioners and academic performance of students and their final records. The final results here show that almost all the 169 students agreed to a large extent that social variables which include gender and ethnicity/tribalism also influence the achievements of some students in educational institutions. Average ages and percentages between average age differences informed the core elements of discussion of the results. It has been revealed that whilst the greater number of the study participants whose ages fell between 21.5% to 34.6% agreed strongly that there were close relationships between ethnicity and student's academic performance both on the positive and negative notes, the other group of the study participants whose average ages fall between 43-53 years were not quite explicit in their response to the issues of ethnicity or tribal influence on academic success and students records in tertiary education. This result raises lots of questions which social psychology and sociological studies have attempted to answer in many instances where human beings have been considered as social animals who believe in networks, bonds, social cohesion and economic ties in societies where they live.

Ethnicity in general has been one of the strongest variables in African societies which produce a cohesive force among individuals and groups of people. The sense of belongingness are easily felt when people from the same ethnic background come together especially to undertake an activity which may be beneficial to them or where value is attached. This paper considered the use of ethnic influences and other social variables in the determination of academic success as less competitive variable which introduces mediocrity among graduates and inauthenticity of academic records so to speak. The affirmation of the ethnicity variable in academic circles like any other human society with its influence on academic success is equally in Supports the theory of critical realism stated in the study.

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