

# **ASSESSMENT Of POLITICAL AWARENESS AMONG STUDENTS Of SOCIAL STUDIES IN NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR CITIZENSHIP.**

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## **Abstract**

The political awareness of social studies students at secondary school in Nigeria for citizenship development was investigated in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria using JSSIII students. Test hypothesis were used to formulate the cognitive aspect of political awareness in social study education(CAPASSE) which is an achievement test constructed to find out how knowledgeable the students are with respect to political education and public affairs and it contains 50 item, the effective aspect of political awareness in social study education(AAPASSE) which is to access the attitude and value of the students the government, leader and politics as a whole and it contains 28 items and the psychomotor aspect of political awareness in social study education(PAPASSE) which tests the students knowledge and skills about politics and political issues. Findings from one way analysis of variance indicated no significant difference exist on the student's performance in CAPASSE, AAPASSE and PAPASSE at 5% level with F values of 88, 51, and 59% respectively. It is concluded that the teaching of social studies in secondary schools in Nigeria will go a long way in balancing the differences in citizenship and political participation among youths.

## **Key wards**

Nigeria, citizenship, political awareness, social studies, JSSIII students

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Today's young people are a source of growing social and academic concern. According to the Carnegie Corporation, nearly half of some 28 million adolescents in the United States between the ages of ten and seventeen are moderately or extremely vulnerable to "multiple high-risk behaviors" such as school failure, drugs and alcohol, unsafe sex, and violence that puts their future in serious jeopardy. Although these problems exist in all classes and groups, they are intensified by the decline in harmonious two-parent families, economic and social adversity, most pronounced in urban areas, and among the poor and minorities.

It is often assumed the schools serves as potential agents of socialization which influences the formation of political nuns, values and attitudes among children. It is also believed that education is an effective instrument for socializing the young through promotion of desirable socio cultural values, creation of political awareness which prepares the youth to perform their function to the nation effectively as they grows up. Developing and understanding one's political ideology is not an easy task, and usually does not occur overnight. For many high school students, that development may vary often and change with his or her environment, teachers and friends. Furthermore, developing a political ideology is not the most important goal for many high school students. Many high school students believe political awareness and being politically active as an adult duty. High school students, who often have these feelings, are unaware of their own personal political beliefs. Thus, many high school students tend to accept the views of their parents/guardians and/or close relatives as their own. Often times without giving any real or meaningful thought to the political issues at hand (Willia et al 2007). Accepting the political views of someone else, as one's own without thought is a major concern for social studies teachers, since a main objective of social studies teachers is to help create effective citizens and engage them in effective deliberation regarding beliefs and values (Gutmann,1987).

Either we must educate children so that they are free to choose among the widest range of lives (given the constraints of cultural coherence) because freedom of choice is the paramount good, or we must educate children so that they will choose the original life that we believe is best because leading a virtuous life is the paramount good. Let children define their own identity or define it for them. Give children liberty or give them virtue. Neither alternative is acceptable: we legitimately value education not just for the liberty but also for the virtue that it bestows on children; and the virtue that we value includes the ability to deliberate among competing conceptions of the good.

At the middle level, educators have given considerable attention to issues involving the organization of the school and to the methods of instruction although they have largely ignored many curriculum concerns. School organizational arrangements at the middle level appear to affect the social studies curriculum, but the most recent research indicates that the dominant structure remains rooted in grade-based courses focusing on Western civilization, world cultures, and U.S. history. (Lengel and Superka 1982).

We have adapted a definition useful for social studies for middle level education from Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977) that sets forth the purpose while addressing the needs of students: the social studies curriculum is an integration of experience and knowledge about human endeavors and human relations designed to foster informed and ethical participation in society.

According to zalliro (2013), the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) in 1992 adopted the following definition of "social studies": Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. (NCSS Task Force on Standards for Teaching and Learning in the Social Studies, 1993, p. 213)

One of the main focuses of a social studies curriculum in elementary school is preparing young students to become good citizens and understanding human values through a historical American perspective. Learning about the history of voting in the United States, world continents, famous women in United States history and Civil War heroes, among other things, provides information for the students to ground themselves with American ideals. Citizenship education has been neglected over the years, because there was no clear boundary between it and social studies. The understanding of citizenship as defined will help the communities in particular and the nation in general to

reduce to the barest minimum the social crime in our society. Moreover, this has an implication for the present curriculum because there is need for a curriculum that is relevant and functional in Nigeria. This can provide work for the teeming youth which can be trained to be self-reliant (Mgbor, 2002). According to puja (2012), multiculturalism and the existence of diversity in societies is not a novel phenomenon, nation states around the world continue to struggle with difference. Events in recent history have resulted in an unprecedented proliferation of multination states, calling for a critical reconsideration of political frameworks and apparatus to account for the demographic implications of mass-scale immigration witnessed in the Twentieth Century (Castles 2003; Zlotnik 2001). Multicultural societies have long been working through different political arrangements with a view to locating the political 'other' within the framework of the liberal democratic nation state. These attempts have entailed the use of various models of inclusion of immigrants, ranging from assimilation and accommodation to the use of liberal multiculturalism and multiculturalism as self-governance. Recent scholarship has revealed that each of these paradigms is undergirded by certain conceptions of culture and identity which, in the case of the former, fail to account for the fluidity of culture, and in the case of the latter, are based on a predominantly liberal understanding of one's identity and the relationship between the self and society (Spinner-Halev 1996). Insofar as these models for political inclusion remain grounded in discourse steeped in quintessentially liberal conceptions of culture, identity and the good life, they fail to account for variant conceptions of the good life and their impact on the construction of the self as an individual and the relational self as well as the role of culture and politics in facilitating equal access and means for the pursuit of life goals in a manner consonant with one's worldviews. The result is the exclusion of certain groups from substantive and meaningful citizenship in multicultural polities.

Identity may be defined as a combination of socio-cultural characteristics which individuals share, or are presumed to share, with others on the basis of which one group may be distinguished from others. Identity is a group concept in the sense that it is based on traits which make individuals members of a group; such traits also provide responses to the question, "Who am I?" Identity has a combination of ethnic, religious, gender, class and other layers all of which refer to the same person either in self definition or as defined by others. Identity as other defined persists irrespective of whether people so labeled accept the definition(s). Thus, people who might see themselves as different may be seen by others as "one of them". There is thus a telling dimension of "othering" and being "othered" in addition to self definitions. As I explore latter, the sense of "othering" is crucial in identity politics. Identity is also about meanings in relations to social existence. In its multi-layered nature, and there is the tendency for some layers to dominate in particular circumstances. Depending on the circumstance, the crucial layer may spell inclusion, exclusion or even violence. It is in this sense that Mohamed Kuna was right in arguing that identity has both objective and subjective components: An identity is a distinguishing label that objectively exists, is subjectively felt, and enables its bearers to experience individually and collectively a sense of solidarity. As a label, it can be assumed by, or imposed on bearers. It is also a prism by which objects, people, and collectivities are sorted, organized, mapped and ordered into meaningful and understandable units. Identities are socially constructed, dynamic and multifaceted. Subjectively, identification with a category is simultaneously a definition of self, so that groups come to identify themselves as ethnic, religious, occupational, national and other terms. Objectively, individuals do not identify in general, but do so in relation to others' definitions of themselves and the boundaries implied in such definitions (Kuna 2004:33; emphasis added).

The complex and often contentious nature of the concept make identity politics a natural outcome. Identity politics is used here to denote the process of categorizing and de-categorizing people (ethnic, religious, gender, etc) into groups on the bases of shared and presumed similarities. More often than not, such similarities may be based on assumptions and stereotypes rather than actual traits, attributes or characteristics. There is thus a regular sense of "in their character" or, in the more popular Nigerian pigeon English, "na demdem"; even when differences between people being pigeonholed into one group are striking. Such categorization and de-categorization become the basis for a range of issues related to rights, opportunities, privileges and entitlements. Identity politics is a basis for determining who is in

and who is out (Alubo 2003) and hence there are contestations and struggles to maintain the *status quo* by those favoured and for change by those left out in the cold.

## 2.0 Identity and Citizenship Contestations in Nigeria

Nigeria returned to civil rule in 1999 after a long period of military dictatorship and tortuous democratic transition programs. One distinguishing characteristic of this return to civil rule is frequent civil strifes and conflicts. Mostly pitting ethnic and religious groups against one another, identity politics and attendant violence have assumed unprecedented dimensions (Alubo 2006, Elaigwu 2005a; Best 2007). Some even alleged that it was a deliberate policy of President Obasanjo to create conflicts as part of democracy dividends (Arukwe 2008). For whatever motive, some identity based conflicts have been unfolding somewhere in Nigeria at any point in time since 1999. The headlines are replete with the reportage and attendant toll on human life and property. What are the triggers of these conflicts and what do they say about national integration? Where particular groups are hounded and hunted, what does the situation say about a common citizenship? It is within this rising profile of civil strifes that I focus on Citizenship and Identity Politics in Nigeria. In what follows, I define identity and dilate on the bases of identity construction and conflicts after which attention turns to discrimination between bearers of particular identities as well as identity based violence. While identity based violence is now widespread in Nigeria, the North central region stands out. I use Plateau State, which has experienced multiple cases, to illustrate the saliency of this phenomenon. The question is, what are the possibilities of overcoming violent identity conflicts in Nigeria and building true unity in diversity in citizenry?

Identity in its ethnic and religious forms is central to the citizenship question in Nigeria because it is a basis for inclusion and exclusion. The issue becomes more crucial because, as in most of Africa, citizenship is tied to group rights and thus, inextricably linked with identity. In effect, identity is a form in which the citizenship question is posed and practically experienced. This perhaps explains the rise in identity politics, especially in relation to material issues. Citizenship is here defined as a relationship between the individual and the state in relation to mutual rights, duties and obligations. Citizenship is also a form of participation in the running of the state and society, and in this sense an agency and subject. As spelt out in the 1999 constitution, one is a citizen of Nigeria provided such as person:

- Was born in Nigeria before the date of independence either of whose parents or any of grandparents belong or belonged to a community indigenous to Nigeria. Provided a person shall not become a citizen of Nigeria by virtue of this section if neither of his parents nor any of his grandparents was born in Nigeria
- Every person born in Nigeria after the date of independence either of whose parents or any of grandparents is a citizen of Nigeria
- Every person born outside Nigeria either of whose parents is a citizen of Nigeria.
- There are also provisions for naturalization and for foreigners to apply for Nigerian citizenship.

The constitutional provision also spells out rights and privileges in a fairly comprehensive manner as to ensure rights of all citizens. The problem is not however, the constitution but the translation of its provisions to reality. Part of this complication is the division of Nigerian citizens –in daily experiences— into *indigenes* and *settlers*. As used in common parlance, an indigene is synonymous with native, autochthon and “son/daughter -of-the soil”, and refers to ascribed identity of being born in a particular location into a specific ethnic group considered to have a “homeland” within the locality. To be an indigene of a place therefore means that the ethnic group can point to a territory as “native land” where such native land is in a local council or state.

The Federal Character Commission has defined indigeneity in the local council and states. It accepts people whose parents and/or grandparents were indigenes and/or people accepted as indigenes by the council. When one is an indigene of a local council in a state s/he is automatically an indigene of that State (Federal Character Commission ND: 16). This position is more trenchantly expressed by Sam Egwu who asserts that “Indigeneity” of a state is conferred on a person whose parents or grandparents were members of a community indigenous to a particular state” (Egwu 2003:37;

2009). Thus Nigerians, who have their ethnic genealogy elsewhere, even if they were born in a particular state or lived all their lives there, are regarded as “settlers” (Alubo 2006; Ibrahim 2006). A settler is regarded as a stranger, a sojourner who may have been born in a location but is regarded as a bird of passage who would ultimately go “home”. Indigenes insist sojourners have a home where they periodically visit for celebration and where prominent members of the former are conveyed for burial. Herein lies an illustration of the nature of identity as both self defined and other imposed. Most of the people defined and treated as settlers do not regard themselves as such. In the Nigerian experience, being an indigene or a settler is a permanent identity, as there is no provision for the latter to convert to the former.

In the daily experiences, the classification of Nigerians into indigenes and settlers only indicates who is native to particular locality and who is not. It creates problems because the classification is a basis for citizenship rights, entitlements and access to opportunities. Nigerians’ daily experiences are replete with tales of denial, exclusion and discrimination of some groups on the one hand, and access, inclusion and a sense of belonging by other groups on the other. The more common forms of discrimination against settlers include the following:

-Employment—available jobs are often reserved for indigenes and where non-natives are employed at all, they are placed on contract appointment. This form of employment has no provision for pension benefits. Sometimes, advertisements for employment are run with the proviso that “only indigenes need apply”.

-Since the return of civil rule, all non-indigenes who were employed have been dismissed from many state civil services, obviously to replace them with indigenes. Increasingly, settlers are perceived as snatching food from the mouths of indigenes, a perception which becomes more telling because of the uneven development. Only few centers (such as the former regional capitals, oil producing areas and state and federal capitals) have thriving organizations and easier opportunities for employment.

-Admissions to secondary and higher institutions—these too are reserved for indigenes and only few non-indigenes are offered places. The issue here goes beyond quota and catchment considerations; there is a clear sense of who receives or is denied priority opportunities.

-Scholarships –this is exclusive to indigenes; non-indigenes are required to “go home”, even where they may not have another home.

-Higher schedule of fees for the non-indigenes in educational institutions such as Polytechnics and Universities. This is enforced without distinction to who may have lived for decades and paid all taxes in the state.

-Standing elections—while non-indigenes can vote, they are frequently not allowed to stand elections. Married women also suffer similar discrimination. The only exception is the Federal Capital Territory where Nigerians qua Nigerians can run for office. I will return to this issue in the discussions of implications below.

There are other forms such as headships of federal institutions and establishments which, since the period of Late General Abacha (1993-1998), have gone to indigenes even where the so called settlers are better qualified. Nigeria’s is in a situation where federal establishments such as universities, colleges of education, research institutes seem to have been appropriated by the states where these are located. But since the appointment of headships is made by the federal government, there is an apparent complicity of the central government in knuckling to the pressures of indigenes. Some of these forms of discrimination have been formalized through certificates of indigene (Alubo 2004, Ibrahim 2006, and Human Rights Watch 2006). These certificates have become prerequisite for admission to tertiary schools and employment, including into the federal civil service. The experiences point to a two tier citizenship structure, the first for indigenes and the second for settlers. In daily encounters, identity and its politics are the bases of contestations for inclusions in opportunities and rights as are available to others. Many of these contestations result in violence. In such conflicts, holders of particular identities as defined by the attackers are singled out for liquidation, forced to relocate and their properties torched. The collective nature of the violence is perhaps serving to strengthen geo-political solidarity. Also important is the near absence of material benefits attached to Nigerian citizenship. This gap is filled by ethnic and religious development associations and thus serving to reinforce divisions. The rise in geo-ethnic movements also serves to weaken national integration as the first priority of various associations such as the *Afenifere* is the Yoruba, the *Ohaneze* is the *Ndigbo*, and the Arewa Consultative Forum is the Hausa-Fulani. Similar geopolitical associations exist from the Middle Belt Minorities as well as for oil bearing Niger Delta Region.

These geo-regional movements were preceded by identity construction and reconstruction which provided the bases of further divisions into new majorities and minorities. This was particularly true each time state and local council creation exercises were carried out. Yet, agitations for the creation of more states and local councils, or simply spaces over which groups could exercise more control and influence, are unrelenting. However, the creation of states and local councils has not in themselves, solved the problems of a sense of belonging and integration, nor have they allayed the fears of domination (Alubo 2004). Instead, these exercises create additional theatres for contestations, as new majorities and minorities are created in the process. Illustrations include Kogi, where the Igala as a national minority are the majority; the same is true of the Tiv in Benue and the Uhrobo in Delta. In some states, a few national majorities find themselves as ethnic minorities such as the Yoruba in Kogi and the Hausa/Fulani in Plateau. Indeed, as Obaro Ikime has argued each time a state is created, there is a new majority nationality and new minorities, and relations within the states have been more acrimonious since states were created than before because the struggle for resources and development become more localized and so more intense (Ikime 2002: 65-66). One only has to recall the relationships after new states were carved out of existing ones to appreciate how an exercise meant to “solve” a problem really creates further fractionalization.

Much more than creating new majorities and minorities, new states also reconfigure the indigene-settler structure. Thus, whenever new states are created, some who were hitherto indigenes of the previous states cease to enjoy that status. In this way, the creation of states, *ipso facto*, redraws the borders and also reconstructs identities. From past experiences, people who lorded it over others as fellow indigenes became bitter enemies. State and local council creations construct and re-construct identities because indigeneity is based on claims to having an ethnic territory within a state. Furthermore, in daily life indigene/settler status assumes different dimensions, depending on the locus of the contestations: federal, state and local councils. The terrain widens and narrows and the criteria change accordingly. At the federal level, for instance, ethnic groups from the same state are indigenes who unite against contestants for other states. The same “indigenes” in solidarity at the federal context become divided into specific ethnic—and sometimes religious— groups at the state level. This same fission and fusion take place at the local council levels where indigenes break into clans and lineages.

The exclusions and denials of rights and opportunities on the basis of identity have resulted in many cases of violence, especially since the return of civil rule in 1999. It appears that military jackboots more effectively kept the lid on the situation. Secondly, as civil rule returned many politicians are fond of ethnic mobilization during electioneering campaigns and thus whipping up sentiments.

The North central region is overrepresented in the table of identity based violence. Here, the conflicts are frequently over the control of spaces such as a state (Alubo 2008) and local council areas. In many instances, religion is deployed and rather than focus on believers, the entire swathes of territories are redefined as “holy land” to be purified and sustained through new religious codes (Casey 2007; Abdu 2005). This is the genre of violence which attended the *sharia* in most states in the North. In *sharia* imposed state, the state governments became enforcers and through its new police, the *hisbah*, offenders—including non-Muslims— were apprehended and disciplined (Abdu 2005, Kuna 2005; Casey 2007). There were also other conflicts such as disputes over land, chieftaincy and the perennial disputes between pastoralists and agriculturalists. More vicious are conflicts over denial and exclusion of some groups from rights and opportunities enjoyed by others. Identity conflicts have been experienced in Ife-Modakeke, Umulerei Aguleri and virtually all over the country (Federal Government of Nigeria 2003; Otite and Albert 2001; Nnoli 2001; Oshagae et al 2001). It is important to focus on specific instances— Plateau State.

From the aforementioned citizenry issues that existed in Nigeria, there is the need for full participation of secondary students in the national political life of the country being a democratic nation. Social studies as a curriculum instrument is assigned a key role successful implementation of the nation political goals. It is in this view that social studies has been accepted as the most important subject through which Nigerians will develop the sense of unity, peace and political awareness and participation in children. This study therefore seek to find out there is any significant difference in the performance of social studies student in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria in attempt to verify the variation in cognitive aspect of political awareness, affective aspect of political awareness and psychomotor aspect of political awareness in citizenship development.

### 3.0 Sampling procedures

Stratified random sampling procedure was employed to derive the population size for this study which involves the selection of a simple random sample from each stratum. The population stratum in this case consists of a sample school selected from each geopolitical zone of Nigeria and each represents their respective stratum. The stratified random sampling techniques in this study ensures the representation of the JSSIII students as the respondent, bearing in mind the geographical spread, the student gender and social study as the subject. The random sampling allows every element of the population to have the same probability of being selected in each state and in each geopolitical zone. Table 1 gives the test questions and their distributed items.

A total of 105 students were selected from each of the selected secondary schools by the same sampling techniques. The total populations of 630 students were subjected to three tests as follows

- (a) the cognitive aspect of political awareness in social study education(CAPASSE) which is an achievement test constructed to find out how knowledgeable the students are with respect to political education and public affairs and it contains 50 item.
- (b) the effective aspect of political awareness in social study education(AAPASSE) which is to access the attitude and value of the students the government, leader and politics as a whole and it contains 28 items
- (c) the psychomotor aspect of political awareness in social study education (PAPASSE) which tests the students knowledge and skills about politics and political issues.

These tests were constructed by adaptation of the research studies of Agboola(1985) and Adekeye(2005). Each test attracts a total of 100marks with 50% and above as positive score and below 50% as negative score.

### 4.0 Data presentation and analysis

Of the 630 administered questionnaires, 599 were completed and returned representing 95% respondent. Relevant information on the performance of the student is presented in the table below.

From the result in table 2 it has been established students of social studies in JSSIII in Nigeria performed better in PAPASSE followed by social studies achievement test and below average in CAPASSE

The significant difference between groups and within group was carried out on the sample population to see if there will be significant difference in the performance of the students from geopolitical zones on the political awareness and citizenship. This was analyzed by one way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The result is presented in tables below.

From the ANOVA above, the null hypothesis that significant difference exist in the performance of student within the geopolitical zone and among geopolitical zones is rejected because the  $F_{cal}$  are greater than  $F_{crit}$  at 5% level of significant for all the test

### 5.0 Conclusion

Citizenship has become a social num among many nation in the word today and demanded adequate attention. The awareness campaign in this respect needed to be taken to the grass root for proper understanding of right of individual living in a nation. In Nigeria this awareness campaign was not properly position giving rise to denial of citizenship rights and associated social crises all over the country. In attempt to investigate the level of political awareness of citizenship in Nigeria, the students of junior secondary schools in Nigeria were assed across the six geopolitical zones of the country using the key subject of social studies. Findings from the survey indicated that at 5% level of significant, there is no significant difference in the performance of JSSIII students studying social studies indicating that citizenship is been thought in schools across the country on average level of 54.52%. However the cognitive aspect of political awareness in social study education(CAPASSE) which is an achievement

test constructed to find out how knowledgeable the students are with respect to political education and public affairs is below average.

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**Table1. Specification of test questions**

Test	contents	test item No	totalNo of items
CAPASSE	culture and identity	14, 44, 45	3
	National integration	15, 18, 22, 25, 27, 35, 36,49, 50	9
	Leadership	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,20,21	15
	Civil rights	23,24,31,32,34,39,40,41	8
	Social environment	26,46,47,48	4
	Social change	16,17,18,19	4
			50
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AAPASSE	culture and identity	-	-
	National integration	23, 25,	2
	Leadership	13,27,28,	3
	Civil rights	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,14,15,16,17,18,19,20, 21,22,24,36	23
	Social environment	-	-
	Social change	-	-
	institution	-	-
			28
			----
PAPASSE	culture and identity	-	-
	National integration	4,5,6,7,16	5
	Leadership	-	-
	Civil rights	3,12,13,14,19	5
	Social environment	1,2,20	3
	Social change	-	-
	Institution	8,9,10,11	4
			20
			----

**Table 2. Descriptive analysis of performance of JSSIII students of social studies in Nigeria**

Test	min. score %	max. score%	mean score%	std deviation
SS. Achievement	5.00	99.00	56.71	20.6430
CAPASSE	4.00	88.00	46.13	18.1510
AAPASSE	2.00	98.00	60.83	22.9306
PAPASSE	4.00	99.00	54.39	29.8878

**Table3. summary of ANOVA for social study achievement**

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F <sub>cal</sub>	F <sub>crit</sub>
Between groups	17785.622	5	3557.124	87.899	2.22
Within groups	237042.56	593	399.735		
Total	254828.18	598			

**Table4. Summary of ANOVA for CAPASSE**

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F <sub>cal</sub>	F <sub>crit</sub>
Between groups	83938.994	5	16787.799	88.037	2.22
Within groups	113079.05	593	190.690		
Total	197018.05	598			

**Table5. summary of ANOVA for AAPASSE**

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F <sub>cal</sub>	F <sub>crit</sub>
Between groups	95192.502	5	19038.500	51.494	2.22
Within groups	219244.79	593	369.721		
Total	314437.29	598			

**Table6. summary of ANOVA for PAPASSE**

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F <sub>cal</sub>	F <sub>crit</sub>
Between groups	177922.29	5	35584.458	59.231	2.22
Within groups	356258.94	593	600.774		
Total	534181.23	598			