
**INFLUENCE OF LEARNING ENVIRONMENT ON
STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN SOCIAL
STUDIES IN EDO SOUTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT**

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Abstract

There is evidence that poor academic achievement in Social Studies abounds in Nigerian junior secondary schools, hence the need for this research. The purpose of this research was to investigate influence of learning environment on students' academic achievement in Social Studies in Edo South Senatorial District. Two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The design of the research was descriptive while the population comprised of public junior secondary schools and 2018/2019 results in Orhionmwon and Oredo local government areas of Edo State. The sample size for the research was twenty one (21) public junior secondary schools which represented 50% of the entire population. Based on the data collected and analyzed, the following results were obtained. The school physical facilities and instructional materials have a high influence on students' academic achievement in Social Studies in Edo South Senatorial District. This means that school physical facilities and instructional materials (Classroom, teachers, toilet, playground, perimeter fence, chalkboard, overhead projector, picture/map, and laboratory), motivates and facilitates the academic achievements of students and provide sound results.

It is recommended that government and school administrators should seek various means of maintaining and providing school physical facilities.

Keywords: *Influence, Physical Facilities, Achievement, Instructional:*

Introduction

Education is the most important component of human resource development and is accorded a pride of place in many countries developmental activities. There is no doubt that the importance of education cannot be underscored because there is no country that has succeeded without educating its people. Education, according to Osokoya (2009), helps to improve security, health, prosperity and ecological balance in the world. It encourages social, economic and cultural progress, tolerance, national and international cooperation. Teaching and learning make education possible. The primary purpose of teaching and learning process is to bring about in the learner desirable change in behaviour through critical thinking. This process however, does not take place in a vacuum but in an environment structured to facilitate learning.

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development OECD (2009) described learning environment as a physical space that supports multiple and diverse teaching and learning programmes including current technologies, promotes effective performance and operation over time; and one that encourages social participation, and provides a healthy, comfortable, safe, secure and stimulating setting for its occupants. Similarly, Tsavga (2011) maintains that the learning environment plays a vital role in determining how students perform or respond to circumstances and situations around them. This implies that no society is devoid of environmental influences. The learning environment determines to a large extent how a student behaves and interacts, that is to say, that the environment in which we find ourselves tends to mould our behaviour so as to meet the demands of life

whether negatively or positively. In Nigeria, there is an increase in the number of students' enrolment in schools with little or no regards to improving the learning environment so as to better their achievement. Driscoll (2009) observed that some of the notable factors that may influence students' academic achievement in secondary schools are; school climate, instructional materials, discipline, physical facilities, teacher quality, type of location of school and class size. This is because; schools with a good and conducive environment that has the best type of teachers, instructional materials and physical facilities will produce better school leavers with high achievement. At times, parents of students are not satisfied with the facilities provided in their children's school. Also, the extent at which some teachers, exhibit high level of indiscipline does not seem to portray them as role models. They rather encourage indiscipline among students by their attitudes. This may have negative influence on students' academic achievement.

However, the societal expectation of quality outputs from the training institution makes students the primary focus of attention in any instructional programme, and the better the learning environment, the better it can meet the goals of education and the society in general. Such goals include equipping students with desirable skills, knowledge and attitudes that will enable them to work and live in the society of knowledge (National Policy on Education, 2013). Teachers are expected to make teaching learners-centered and create enabling environment for students to interact with learning materials in order to concretize their knowledge and skills so that they can become self-confident and self-reliant, and contribute meaningfully to the socio-economic development of the society.

Social Studies as one of the core subjects in junior secondary school curriculum in Nigeria represents one of the modern curricular arrangements which focus on interdisciplinary study that seeks to solve the complex problems of human being in totality. The idea of introducing Social Studies as a subject in Nigeria came up before the civil war, when the social development of Nigerians could no longer cope with the level of colonial

destruction. This situation led to indiscipline among youths and adults. To minimize this and socialize the citizens in such a way as to build a strong, united and disciplined Nigeria, the type of education that will help the citizens to know more about the society became very important. Social Studies sees the need for students to be given the necessary information for enlightenment, to be taught to have respect for law and order, to appreciate the need to be honest and diligent and to cooperate in their community.

Therefore, the researcher has been motivated to conduct this research on learning environment because of what he considered as deplorable conditions of the learning environment especially the physical aspects in spite of its unquantifiable roles in facilitating students' academic achievement. Thus, this study closely looked at the learning environment especially the physical facilities in Edo South and its influence on the student's achievement in Social Studies in junior secondary schools. However, for the purpose of this study, only the physical learning environment was considered.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate influence of learning environment on students' achievement in Social Studies in Edo South Senatorial District. Specifically the study intends to:

- i. ascertain the influence of instructional materials on student's academic achievement in Social Studies in Edo South Senatorial District.
- ii. ascertain the extent the quality of the physical learning environment with regard to school buildings influence the academic achievements of students in Social Studies in Edo South Senatorial District.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study.

- i. School physical facilities have no significant influence on student's academic achievement in Social Studies in Edo South Senatorial District.

- ii. Instructional materials have no significant influence on Student's academic achievement in Social Studies in Edo South Senatorial District.

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey designed to investigate influence of learning environment on students' achievement in Social Studies in Edo South. The population of this study comprised all the twenty eight (28) junior secondary schools in Orhionmwon Local Government Area and the fourteen (14) junior secondary schools in Oredo Local Government Area. The result of the 2018/2019 academic session for junior secondary school certificate examination (JSSCE) was also used. Purposive sampling technique was used to select two local government areas, where there are renovated schools and dilapidated schools. Thereafter, twenty-one (21) junior secondary schools which represented fifty percent (50) of the entire schools in the local government selected were sampled. The instruments for this study were the 2018/2019 academic session result for junior secondary school certificate examination (JSSCE) and a self-constructed checklist titled- The Adequacy of Learning Environment (TALE). The instrument was developed by the researcher and it consisted of 25 items structured in the following order of (3) adequate (2) fairly adequate (1) inadequate. The instruments were screened by experts in Social Studies in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City. The criticisms, suggestions and recommendations of the experts were incorporated in the final draft of the instrument.

Results

The analysis of data and results of the study are summarized below.

Hypothesis 1: School Physical facilities have no significant influence on student's academic achievement in Social Studies in Edo South Senatorial District.

Table 1: t-test Summary of the Physical Facilities and Academic Achievements

Factors	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	P-value	Decision
Learning Environment	21	3.24	0.27119	33.363	0.00	HS	
Students' Achievement	100	1.65	1.82				

Keys: N = Number of participants, = mean, SD = Standard Deviation, df = degree of freedom, t-cal = calculated value, p-value = table value, HS = Highly significant $p < 0.001$

Table 1 shows that, the calculated 0.000 is lesser than 0.05 [$P < 0.05$]. This is evident in the t-statistics value of (33.363 and a p-value = 0.000). This implies that, there is a high significant difference between the learning environment and students' academic achievement in Social Studies. Testing at alpha level of .05, shows high significance. Since all the probability values are less than .05. Therefore the stated null hypothesis is rejected; hence there is a high significant influence of physical facility on students' academic achievement in Social Studies in Edo South Senatorial District.

Hypothesis 2: Instructional materials have no significant influence on Students' academic achievement in Social Studies in Edo South Senatorial District.

Table 2: t-test Summary of the Instructional Materials and Academic Achievements

Factors	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	P-value	Decision
Learning Environment	21	3.02	0.44	119	23.498	0.000	HS
Students' Achievement	100	1.65	1.82				

Keys: N = Number of participants, = mean, SD = Standard Deviation, df = degree of freedom, t-cal = calculated value, p-value = table value, HS = Highly significant $p < 0.001$

Table 2 shows that, the calculated 0.000 is lesser than 0.05 [$P < 0.05$]. This is evident in the t-statistics value of (23.498 and a p-value = 0.000). This implies that, there is a high significance different between the learning environment and students' academic achievement in Social Studies. Testing at alpha level of .05 shows this significance. Since all the probability values are less than .05. Therefore the stated null hypothesis is rejected; hence there is significant influence on students' academic achievement in Social Studies in Edo South Senatorial District.

Discussions

The findings of this study indicated that there was a significant contribution of school physical facilities to students' academic achievement in Social Studies in junior secondary school certificate examination. These findings implied that school physical facilities influence students' academic achievement in Social Studies in junior secondary schools. The variables considered in school physical facilities include chairs, tables/desk, teaching staff and offices. The identified areas above ranked high in the opinion of the checklist. The above views are in agreement with the view of Akhtar (2010) that school physical facilities such as chairs, tables/desk, offices, teaching staffs, classroom accommodation for teaching and learning, promote the academic achievement of students in the school. The finding above underscores the importance of the provision of staff offices, adequate chairs and table/desk teaching staff in the school in order to enhance students' academic achievement.

Secondly, the findings also show that instructional materials in Social Studies instruction in the classroom have significant influence on Students' academic achievement of junior secondary school certificate examination in Social Studies. In other words, these indicate that academic achievement of the students in Social Studies in junior secondary school certificate examination is significantly dependent on instructional materials. Therefore, in line with the response to the checklist in the instructional materials such as chalkboard, over-head projector, video-tape,

recorder/player, picture/map, colour/painting, laboratory and health and safety are adequate and influence students' academic achievement. The findings are in agreement with the study of Edward (2012), who argued that, if students worked with wide variety of materials their experience becomes real rather than abstract. He is also in support of the fact that students gain more by classifying observing varying and handling of instructional materials used for the learning.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore concluded that learning environment in Edo South Senatorial Districts influences students' academic achievements in Social Studies. The learning environment determines to a large extent how a student behaves and interacts, that is to say that the environment in which we find ourselves tends to mould our behavior so as to meet the demands of life whether negatively or positively.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that, the government and school administrators should seek various means of maintaining and providing school physical facilities. Adequate classroom buildings should be provided in the public schools and instructional materials to help promote effective teaching and learning for the students to improve academically. The schools should provide good chairs, tables/desk and quality teaching staff as this will ensure a better performance of students.

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