

Impact of Learning Environment on Junior Secondary School Students' Performance in Civic Education in Kogi State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the impact of learning environment on junior secondary school students' performance in Civic Education in Kogi State, Nigeria. The study was set to: determine the impact of learning environment on students' performance in Civic education in urban and rural secondary school in Kogi State; and examine the impact of learning materials on students' performance in civic education in junior secondary schools in Kogi State. The study adopted ex-post facto research design with the total population of 10,295 students out of which a sample size of 375 respondents was sampled for the study. The instrument tagged learning environment and students performance questionnaire (LESPQ) and students' end of term examination scores was used to obtained data for the study. The instrument was trial tested – tested and a reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained. Data collected was analyzed statistically using descriptive statistics which include mean and standard deviation while inferential statistics of t–test was used to test the formulated hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Finding revealed among others that learning environment have impact on student performance in civic education in urban and rural junior secondary schools in Kogi State. Recommendations were made among others that Kogi State Government should make secondary schools in the state more conducive for learning by providing facilities such as up to date textbooks, learning materials, adequate classrooms should be provided with chairs and desks to correspond with the yearly increase of students' enrolment.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Civic Education, Learning Environment, Quality Education, Rural and Urban Schools.

Introduction

Quality education at all levels, primary, secondary and tertiary is desired of all Nigeria. At the junior secondary school level, quality education is absolutely necessary because it serves as the foundation for senior secondary school and tertiary level and for people to provide self – employment if they cannot continue with the tertiary level. If that basics foundation is weak it would lead to national catastrophe as progress in the society becomes very difficult. Hence all concerned with secondary education should make their best input in order to ensure that a very solid foundation is laid. Environment has been discovered as the major source of cognitive development and also responsible for intellectual acquisition of a child. Environment include those things which are found around men or which surround mankind and are capable of affecting his social development. Among the things which constitute man's social environment are families, peer group, community, religion, school and health services, public utilities such as transport and communication network system and recreation centre. Environment is a place

where a child functions, this could be the home, the school, peer group, classroom and the totality of the child's upbringing including his spiritual life, physical needs, social needs and psychological needs (Akem & Ortese, 2004).

School environment place a vital role in effective positive change in the behaviour of students; absence of this could lead to various negative behaviour such as vandalism, drugs and alcohol abuse, examination malpractices, violence, secret cults, stealing, truancy, sex abuse and so on. Today's youth of the moral decadence is tomorrow's adult's criminality unless the ugly school environment is enriched. The environment in which learning is to take place whether within or outside the classroom should be a stimulating environment which will encourage exploration, discovering, investigation as well as challenges that would assist students to become problems solvers and rational decision makers. (Auta, 2012)

Musaaza and Okon (2009) commended that school social environment g adequately planned and maintained enhances effective teaching and learning in such school. According to Mick Zais (2011), school environment means the extent to which schools setting promote student's safety and student's health which may include topics such as physical, plants, the academic environment available, mental health support and services, fairness and adequacy of disciplinary procedures as supported by relevant research and an assent validity. The learning environment in this context focuses on the school physical and social environment in terms of the school building, size of the classrooms, assembly halls, laboratories, libraries facilities, staffroom, toilet, school compound, play ground and so on. The physical environment should be both appropriate and attractive to teachers and students in the school (Allen, 2009)

Civic instruction across the nation varies widely in its structure, contents and quality. Society have long interest in the ways in which their young are prepared for citizenship and in how they learn to take part in civic life. Today, that interest might better be described as a concern in fact as a growing concern, particularly in democratic society. There is evidence aplenty that no country, including Nigeria has achieved the level of understanding and acceptance of the right and responsibilities among the totality of its citizens that is required for the maintenance and improvement of any constitutional democracy (center for civic education 2004:1). Civic education is an important component of education that cultivates citizens to participate in the public life of a democracy, to use their right and to discharge their responsibilities with the necessary knowledge and skills. As one step of this education process, education has been assuming the missing to foster citizen with the right to lead (Babchuk, Babchuks, Boggs & Ai, 2007).

Academic performance refers to the academic capabilities of learners to perform a certain task over a period of time having undergone instructions. Academic performance according to Larin cited in Okereke (2005) refers to some methods of expressing a students scholastic standing. This can be regarded as a source or subject grade, an average for a group of subject in a program of study for example civic education. This study therefore examines the impact of learning environment on junior secondary school students' performance in civic

education in Kogi State, Nigeria. Academic performance according to Narad and Abdullah (2016): It is the knowledge gained which is assessed by marks, by a teacher and educational goals set by students and teachers to be achieved over a specific period of time. School exist for the purpose of teaching and learning. Human and materials resources are deployed for this purpose. The realization that transfer of knowledge does not only take place in the four walls of the classroom from the teacher to the students but rather that learning takes place through discovery, exploration, interaction with the internal and external environment has necessitated the creative and innovative development of teaching and learning facilities that reflect this changes. School exist to serve socio-economic and political needs of the ever-changing society consequently they are in constant interaction with their external environment.

Learning environment includes school buildings (classroom, assembly halls, laboratories and workshops, libraries and so on), learning materials and devices such as modern educational hardwares and their softwares in the form of magnetic tapes, films and transparencies (Ogbodo, 2005). They are therefore material things that facilitate teaching and learning process in the school. These facilities enable a skilful teacher to achieve a level of instructional effectiveness that far exceeds what is possible when they are not provided (Cataldi in Auta, 2012). Learning environment should be properly planned, developed and maintained in order to ensure its relevance to the school curriculum and its effective teaching and learning in any educational institution (Dare, 2010).

The ultimate goal of civic education is to prepare generation for the essential principles and value of democracy embodied with a high sense of reasonability and active engagement in the issues related to the society, community, or state in their everyday life (Centre for Civic Education, 2004). Civic education, wherever and however undertaken, prepares people of a country especially the young, to carry out their roles as citizens. Civic education is, therefore, “the cultivation of the virtues, knowledge, and skills necessary for political participation” (Gatmann in Tigran & Marcie, 2008). The most wide spread application of civic education according to Branson and Quigled (2006) is in formal school education. Its being as part of the regular curriculum in primary schools and secondary schools around the world, and there are extensive pedagogical resources available from the many civic society organisations involved in promoting this aspect of approach. They further argued that civic education was an important component of education that cultivates citizens to participate in public life of a democracy to use their right and to discharge their responsibilities with the necessary knowledge and skills.

Civic education is essential to sustain constitutional democracy, (Branson, 2004) the habits of the mind, as well as “habits of the heart, “the disposition that inform the democratic ethos, are not inherited. As Alexis de Toquerille (2010) pointed out, each new generation was a new people that must acquire the knowledge, learn the skills, and develop the dispositions or traits of private and public characters that undergird a constitutional democracy. Those dispositions must be fostered and nurtured by word and study and by the power of example. Alexis de Toquerille (2010) further mentioned that democracy was not a “machine that would have gone itself” but must be consciously reproduced one generation after another. Civic education, therefore, is or should be a prime concern. There is no more important task than the

development of an informed, effective, and responsible citizenry. Democracies are sustained by citizens who have the requisite knowledge, skills and dispositions. Absent, a reasoned of commitment on the part of its citizens to the fundamental values and principles of democracy, a free and open society cannot succeed. It is imperative, therefore that education, policy makers, and members of civic society make the case and ask for the support of civic education from all segment of institution and government (Branson, 2008). Students' performance can be worked on using a conducive learning environment in the teaching and learning of civic education. Nigerian educational research and development council (NERDC, 2007), noted that the use of a conducive learning environment in the teaching – learning process is the best way to facilitate the teaching and learning of civic education.

Rural schools are those located in rural areas or villages with fewer than 3,000 inhabitants. Rural schools are also located in countries with less than 40,000 populations and outside a standard and metropolitan area and also lack behind when it comes to economic wellbeing. Bakers (2008) claimed that many problems such as finances, shortage of teachers, changing school values and special interest groups were magnified in small schools. Most of the people in rural area are living in poverty due to their poor salary. In rural area, there are fewer schools and the groups are mixed, so you get all varieties and the education becomes more uniform.

Urban schools are located in countries with more than 200,000 population and inside a standard metropolitan statistical area. Urban schools are larger, had more teachers, administrators and staffs and offered more courses and extra-curricular activities. Urban schools are characterized by larger number of people, by high density, by great diversity and heterogeneity of characteristics and concerns of people by high degree of mobility, technical development. At the most technical level, urban schools are classified as city schools by national centre for education statistics (NIES) This study adopts the behaviourist learning theory which has a long tradition in education policies. Any aspect of general and special education such as curriculum pedagogy and assessment have been shaped by the principles of behaviourist learning theory. The behaviourist, according to Smith (2009) view learning as a change in behaviour and the purpose of learning is to produce a behavioural change in a desired direction.

Statement of the Problem

The successful implementation of any educational programme depends mostly on the quality of the learning environment that are provided for such programme. Today, most of the learning facilities that are supposed to promote and enhance teaching and learning in junior secondary schools in Kogi state are in bad shape, creating serious challenges to the 21st century educational needs of the learners. In spite of the various efforts put by the government and stakeholders in education to achieve the objectives of education, it seems that attempts are not yielding positive results in junior secondary schools in Kogi state. One cannot help but observe the rural and urban schools learning environment, equipment and facilities in schools, the unhealthy nature of the buildings, uncompleted, old and antiquated, sometimes unattractive

buildings, over-crowded and un-conducive, unsightly and unhygienic toilets, inadequate laboratories and workshops.

Some of the challenges among others in rural schools are high level of poverty, under funding, shortage or unqualified teachers; rural students have lower literacy rate than urban students which is likely a reflection of high level of poverty often found in rural areas. It is important to note that the challenges facing urban schools systems are not entirely unique to metropolitan areas, nor are all urban school systems confronted with the same challenges but urban schools are faced with the following challenges to mention but few; urban school operated in densely populated areas serving significantly more students, higher concentration of purely greater racial ethnic diversity which makes the students start learning in already deprived and disadvantaged school environment with population explosion, insufficient desks, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate learning materials, proportion of unqualified teachers, poorly educated and ill-motivated teachers characterized the entire system.

A conducive learning environment contributes to the success of every student in any school. A study carried out by Harlen (2006), revealed that students in classrooms with large windows natural lightening and well-designed skylights were found to perform well from 19 to 25% better than their peers in classrooms without these factors. Not only environmental conditions in schools affect the students but also inoperative heating system, inadequate ventilation and poor lighting system. The overall building condition, the age of the building and the windows in the instructional areas were positively related to students' academic performance in learning (Bullock 2007) Ajayi (2010) seriously assumes that uncondusive learning atmosphere or deteriorating facilities in the place of study forms a serious constraint to students' academic performance. Upon this background, this study was carried out to examine the impact of leaning environment on junior secondary school student's academic performance in civic education in Kogi state, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The study was set to:

1. determine the impact of learning environment on students' academic performance in civic education in urban and rural junior secondary schools in Kogi state; and
2. examine the impact of learning materials on students' performance in civic education in junior secondary schools in Kogi State.

Research Questions

The study provided answer to the following questions:

1. What impact does learning environment have on students' performance in civic education in urban and rural junior secondary schools in Kogi State?
2. What is the impact of learning materials on students' academic performance in civic education in junior secondary schools in Kogi State?

Research Hypotheses

H0₁: There is no significant impact the impact of learning environment on students' performance in civic education in urban and rural junior secondary schools in Kogi State.

H0₂: There is no significant impact in the impact of learning materials on students' performance in civic education in junior secondary schools in Kogi State.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was ex-post facto research design. The population of this study consisted of two hundred and fifty-two (252) junior secondary schools in Kogi State with a total of ten thousand two hundred and ninety-five (10,295) students, comprising male population of (5291) and female population of (5004). A sample size of three hundred and seventy-five (375) respondents was used for the study. The samples consist of both male and female students from Ijumu, Okene and Lokoja Local Government areas of Kogi State. These three hundred and seventy-five (375) respondents were systematically selected using stratified sampling technique in order to ensure ample representation. A researcher made instrument tagged "learning environment and students' performance questionnaire (LESPQ)" and students' end of term examination scores was used to collect data from respondent. The learning environment and the questionnaire was scrutinized by experts in the Department of Educational Foundation and Curriculum, Faculty of Education and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and two civic education teachers from Kogi State Junior secondary school; This was with a view of giving it both content and face validity. To establish the reliability of the instrument a pilot study was conducted and a reliability index of 0.85 was obtained. Data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. For the null hypotheses, independent sample t-test was used to test each of them at 0.05 level of significance.

Result and Discussion

Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics (means and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (t-test).

Research Question 1: What impact does learning environment have on students' performance in civic education in urban and rural junior secondary schools in Kogi State?

Table 1: Mean score of respondents on the impact of learning environment on students' performance in civic education in urban and rural junior secondary schools in Kogi State

Variable	Location	N	Mean	SD	Mean Diff.
Learning Environment	Urban Schools	224	31.04	9.11	12.83
	Rural Schools	151	18.21	6.70	

Table 1 revealed that learning environment has impact on students' performance in civic education in urban and rural junior secondary schools in Kogi State. The Table presents the

mean value of 31.04 with standard deviation of 9.11 for students in urban located schools and mean value of 18.21 with standard deviation of 6.70 for the students in rural schools. The mean difference of the two groups stood at 12.83. This result implies that a good school location in urban schools with accessible road, good playing field, neat toilet and large classroom with lightening and library stocked with up-to-date textbooks have positive impact on students' performance.

Research Question 2: What is the impact of learning materials on students' academic performance in civic education in junior secondary schools in Kogi State?

Table 2: Mean score of respondents on the impact of learning materials on students' performance in civic education in junior secondary schools in Kogi State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Mean Diff.
Students' Opinion Learning materials	375	130.5	28.08	33.68
Academic performance	375	96.82	18.83	

Table 2 revealed that learning materials has impact on students' academic performance in civic education in junior secondary schools in Kogi State as the mean response of students on the impact of learning materials was higher than the mean of students' end of term examination scores. The table presents the mean of 130.5 with standard deviation of 28.08 for students' opinions on the impact of learning materials while students' end of term examination scores recorded the mean of 96.82 with standard deviation of 18.82. The mean difference of the two groups stood at 33.68. The implication of this result is that teaching and learning does not take place in a vacuum, therefore, learning materials give meaning to the planned curricula and extra-curricular activities.

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the impact of learning environment on students' performance in civic education in urban and rural junior secondary schools in Kogi State.

Table 3: Independent sample t-test on the impact of learning environment on students' performance in civic education in urban and rural junior secondary schools in Kogi State

Variable	Location	N	Mean	SD	df	α	t-cal	t-rit	Sig.	Decision
Learning environment	Urban Schools	224	31.04	9.11	374	0.05	2.82	1.96	.003	Rejected
	Rural Schools	151	18.21	6.70						

Table 3 revealed that learning environment has impact on students' academic performance in civic education in urban and rural junior secondary schools in Kogi State. The table shows the mean of 31.04 and standard deviation of 9.11 for students in urban junior secondary schools while students in rural junior secondary schools recorded the mean of 18.21 with standard deviation of 6.70. The *t-cal* is 2.82 and *t-crit* is 1.96, while the *p-value* is 0.003 ($P < 0.005$). The null-hypothesis is thus rejected because there was a significant difference in the impact of learning environment on students' performance in civic education in urban and rural junior secondary schools in Kogi State.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the impact of learning materials on students' academic performance in civic education in junior secondary schools in Kogi State.

Table 4: Independent sample t-test on the impact of learning materials on students' performance in civic education in junior secondary schools in Kogi State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	α	t-cal	t-crit	Sig.	Decision
Student opinion	375	130.5	28.08						
Learning environment				374	0.05	7.41	1.96	.000	Rejected
Academic performance	375	96.82	18.83						

Note: *ETES* means end of term examination scores

Table 4 revealed the mean of 130.5 and standard deviation of 28.08 for students' opinions on the impact of learning materials while students' end of term examination scores had the mean of 96.82 with standard deviation of 18.83. The table also presents the *t-cal* of 7.41 and *t-crit* of 1.96, while the *p-value* is 0.000 ($P < 0.005$). The null-hypothesis is thus rejected because there was a significant difference in the impact of learning materials on the performance of students in civic education in junior secondary schools in Kogi State.

Discussion of Findings

Learning Environment on Students' Performance in Civic Education in Urban and Rural Junior Secondary Schools in Kogi State.

Findings from this study supports some of the researches made within the country and in other countries of the world. Therefore, the findings are discussed as follows.

In view of the findings from hypothesis one, it was evident that learning environment have impact on student's academic performance in civic education in urban and rural junior secondary schools in Kogi state. Hence, the table shows the mean of 31.04 and standard deviation of 9.11 for students in urban junior secondary schools while students in rural junior secondary schools recorded the mean of 18.21 with standard deviation of 6.70. The *t.cal* is 2.82 and *t.crit* is 1.96, while the *p-value* is 0.003 $< p < 0.005$. The null hypothesis is rejected because

there was a significant difference in the impact of learning environment on students' academic performance in civic education in urban and rural junior secondary schools in Kogi state.

The implication of this result is that a good school location with accesable road, good field of play, neat toilet and large classrooms with lightening and library stocked with up-to-date text books have positive impact on students' academic performance. This finding was conformed by the findings of Shernoff. Tonks and Brelt (2002) who revealed that optimum learning is a product of a conducive learning environment, and the is also in line with the study carried out by Hale (2002) who revealed that students in classroom with large windows, natural lightening and well-designed skylight were found to perform well from 19 to 25% better than their peers in classroom without these features. He further advised that provision should be made to provide enough classrooms and other facilities in schools so as to aid students' academic performance.

Learning Materials on Students' Performance in civic Education in Junior Secondary Schools in Kogi State

The second findings of the study revealed that learning materials had impact on students' performance in civic education in junior secondary schools in Kogi State. Hence, hypothesis two which says there was no significant difference in the impact of learning materials on the performance of students in civic education in junior secondary schools in Kogi State was rejected. The implication of this result is that teaching and learning does not take place in a vacuum, therefore, learning materials give meaning to the planned curricula and extra-curricular activities. This finding is in line with the findings of Ibrahim (2013) which revealed that adequate supply of learning materials in schools brings about effective teaching and learning. Also, this finding is evident in the contributions of (Broome, 2005; Hughes, 2005; Lyons, 2001) that students performance depended upon the physical school facility, its age, the design and the condition of the school.

Conclusion

In view of the findings from this study and resent educational researches that examined rural and urban differences in their achievements, many educators' researchers, legislators and the general public believe that students from rural schools mostly receive an education that is inferior compared to the students that live in urban areas. Students backgrounds also impact on their academic performance where we can see that lives in rural areas has low academic achievements when compared with the students that live in urban areas. There are many factors that cause the gap performance between students in the rural and urban areas. Students in urban schools are open to many advantages compared to students in rural schools. The National Education Association said that the low performing youths are in public rural schools (Brown and Swanson, 2001). Conclusion was made in this study that unconducive learning environment has negative impact on students' academic performance. In addition, a good school location with accessible road, good field of play, neat toilet and large classroom with lighting and library stocked with up-to-date textbooks have positive impact on students' academic performance and

that whenever students are exposed to unhealthy atmosphere as a result of overcrowded classrooms, shortage of teachers, unqualified teachers, their academic performance can be negatively affected. Also, as teaching and learning does not take place in a vacuum, therefore, learning materials give meaning to the planned curriculum and extra-curricular activities. As such, cleanliness, orderliness and safety of the learning environment not only aids effective learning but have positive impact on students' academic performance.

Recommendations

Based on the major findings of this study, the following recommendation if taken up, would improve considerably the learning environment in secondary schools in Nigeria and Kogi state in particular.

1. Government has to play their role in improving educational outcomes for rural students. Government should provide enough facilities to the schools; besides that, government also most provide a financial support to students that live in rural areas where we know that most of them come from low income families and cannot afford to get better educational services. Facilities that were provided must be fair and equal treatment should be given to rural schools same like the urban schools.
2. Best educators also should be placed in rural schools because they can help students to improve their academic performances. Good teachers will provide good students. Most important is government should ensure that teachers are adequately qualified to teach the subjects that are allocated for them and they can do their work properly. Education department also should visit all schools (rural especially) to establish and verify their needs to ensure that resources are allocated in line with their needs
3. Develop a plan to ensure all students can connect to the internet outside school.
4. Adequate classrooms should be provided with chairs and desks to correspond with yearly increase of students' enrolment.
5. Rural communities should develop ways to challenge their brightest students to return to rural areas, these individuals can provide the expertise needed to develop rural communities, even in the face of societal pressures that encourage urban development at the expenses of rural development.
6. Parents should also play their roles at home. Although most parents in rural areas have no education, they can help their children's academic performance in term of giving them moral support and motivation for learning. They should always care about their child's academic performance and monitor their progress.
7. Kogi state government should make school environment more appealing, attractive, friendly and safe for learning.

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