

Critical Environmental Factors Affecting Learning in College of Education

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Abstract

Learning environment in modern day Nigeria has not been friendly with both learners and teachers and this has created a lot of vacuum in the learning process. This study discusses the critical factors affecting learning environment. This study identifies certain factors like environmental, social, intellectual that inhibit the effective participatory of students in a learning environment. The study adopted triangulate research method and about 227 participants were involved in the administration of the questionnaire for study. The data collected from the questionnaires administered were presented through frequency percentage counts. Chi-square (X^2) analysis was used for testing the hypotheses to justify the outcome of the study. Our findings, shows how much learning influence environments have on the students' success. It also reveal that students who learn in conducive environments effectively receive the adequate knowledge and performance required of them. The study concludes that critical factors such as cultural, social, environmental etc. have negative influence on the learning environment. We recommended that learning environment in nook and crannies of the world should be given appropriate facilities and attention to make it a conducive environment for learners and as well pane way for students to have freedom to express their feeling and connections of knowledge passed across by the educators.

Keywords: College of Education; Learning; Environmental Factors; Students.

1. Introduction

It is a well-known fact that academic endeavors can never be achieved when students learn in an unhealthy environment. After all, it is a general opinion that some environments are more conducive for teaching/learning and academic performance of the students. For instance a student taking a test in a quiet, peaceful room will almost certainly be better than a student taking the same test in a busy, chaotic room. The learning environment plays a prominent role in producing best quality out of the students who are poised to become great leaders and managers for any country in the world. Dorman et al. (2006) stated that educational learning environment is specifically related to, and includes environment, climate and manner of that particular setting in which learning occurs

Olasunmade (2016) noted that learning does not exist in vacuum. It actually means, intellectual development of the student cannot be achieved without an established relationship between where students are learning, learners, educators as well as the stakeholders. Tanyi Jain (2011), argued that the influence of environment begins since the time of the conception of the child in the womb of the mother. Foetus in the womb is influenced by mother's mental, physical and emotional conditions. Learning is affected by physical conditions at home such as: large family, small family, insufficient ventilation, improper lighting, uncomfortable temperature, noisy home environment due to use of radio and television etc. Learning involves new ways of doing things with no limit to adopt the ways and rears to attain the goals (Dharmaraj, 2015).

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In actual sense, learning environment refers to the diverse physical locations, contexts, and cultures in which students learn (Glossary of Educational Reform, 2016). In other words, for the learning process to be facilitated effectively, a total environment for learning must be provided for the learners to optimize their ability to learn comfortably. Dorman et al (2006) stated that educational learning environment is specifically related to, and includes environment, climate and ssnneerr of that particular setting in which learning occurs. In general terms, learning environment is seen as a constructive and knowledge building science. Though, various researches have been conducted on the perception of students concerning learning environment and the factors that can be effectively used to describe the learning environment in different localities.

Therefore, the significance of this research is that there are few similar researchers on the subject understudy and we discovered that none of the early researches have been conducted in the context of Nigeria most especially in secondary schools.

This research was conducted to identify the critical factors that are affecting the learning environment that makes learning process difficult for both educators and learners. This moves, help in providing suggestions that would promote a better conducive learning atmosphere at large.

1.1. Objectives of the study

The broad objective of this study is to assess critical factors affecting learning environment. However the specific objectives are to:

1. To describe the characteristics of a good learning environment.
2. To identify and examine critical factors affecting learning environment.
3. To proffer solutions to the critical factors affecting learning environment.

1.2. Research questions

1. What are the characteristics of a good learning environment?
2. What are the critical factors affecting learning environment in Nigeria?
3. What are the solutions to critical factors affecting learning environment in Nigeria?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Classroom Environment

Peng et al (2013) stated that Students tended to perform better academically, demonstrated greater levels of effort and persistence in classrooms, and exhibited superior fluency, flexibility, and creativity in classrooms where teachers were perceived to emphasize learning and improving.

Suleman and Hussain (2014) reported that studies on the classroom environment revealed that physical environment plays a vital role in the teaching-learning process. It can affect the performance of both teachers and students. The classroom environment includes many different facets. The environment can include the placement of tables and chairs, lighting and temperature, classroom management, discipline techniques, and engaging lesson plans.

Stewart (2014) Research on classroom socio-emotional context indicates that when students believe that their teachers create a sense of community, respond to students' needs, and foster meaningful relationships in the classroom, positive student academic and behavioural adjustment ensues.

Kekare (2015) in her study titled as "Classroom Environment and Academic Motivation" explored the relationship between classroom environment and academic achievement of the subjects. The subjects were 11th class students. The sample of 80 students was selected from various colleges of Aurangabad city. Simple random sampling method was used for selecting subjects. The study was experimental "pre-test post-test equivalent group design" was used for this study. Statistical data was collected from pre-test post-test. Mean, standard deviation and t test were used for

statistical procedure. In this study results are significant at 0.05 levels. The study showed that there is significant difference between classroom physical environment and academic achievement of subjects.

Rankai (2016) in her study titled “Effect of Classroom Environment on Achievement Motivation” provided information for parents, educators and school administrator to reflect upon various aspects that help students in achieving their academic goals. In doing so, they can investigate the possibility of introducing those factors to their school, which may consequently lead to enhancing students educational out come in school. Previous studies of Whitaker (2004), explored that main variable in the classroom is not the student, but the teacher. Tyler & Boelter, (2008) teacher expectations as strong and reliable predictors of performance among elementary, middle and high school students. Tyler and Boelter (2008b), positive teacher expectations were associated with high academic performance or academic gains; whereas negative teacher expectations resulted in decrease in academic performance.

Stewart (2016) in the study titled “Examining Student and Teacher Perceptions of the Classroom Social Environmental cross School Context: Effects of Individual Factors” stated that although teachers and students are the primary actors in the classroom environment, they often have different perceptions of the instructional and relational aspects of the classroom. Despite these differences, research indicates perceptions of the quality of the classroom social environment have implications for both student and teacher outcomes.

2.2. Characteristics of a good learning environment

In making learning effective and substantial, the environment needs to be conducive for both teachers and learners. Developing an engaging and positive learning environment for learners, especially in a particular course, is one of the most creative aspects of teaching. Typically, the focus is either on the physical learning environments (institutional) like lecture theaters, classrooms, or labs; or on different technologies that are used to develop online learning -- environments (Paccoon Gang, 2019). The teacher is considered is a fact that the academic qualifications, knowledge of the subject matter, competence and skills of teaching and commitment of the teacher have effective impact on the teaching learning process (Ahmed, 2000).

- a. Physically balanced
- b. Environmentally friendly.
- c. Psychologically oriented.
- d. Expression Free

One of the reasons for students being in school is to acquire knowledge and for this aim to be achieved and realizable, it is required of both school administrators and teachers to give room for their wards to express themselves freely regarding what they have learnt and to think creatively outside the box at any given time. In other words, such opportunity would build more awareness among them and also create self confidence in them whenever the need to arises to express individuals' ideas.

2.3. Critical factors affecting learning environment

Learning would have been very smooth for learners to comprehend but owing to some multifaceted issues the process continues to be tormenting the learning environment and it is making teaching and learning difficult for teachers and learners. These factors could be grouped as relating to intellectual, environmental, psychological, cultural and socio-emotional. Though, there are many factors affecting learning environment but the mentioned ones are critical in nature and stands to ruin educational system. Some of these critical factors are discussed below:

2.3.1. Intellectual Factors

Intellect of man is very crucial in his learning ability. A student’s level of intellect in the school determines his success in the process of learning. It is widely accepted that any students with low level of intellectualism tends to find it difficult in having absolute control over school work and its mastery.

2.3.2. Physical Factors

Physical structures and appearance in a learning environment is another considerable factor that must be given priority in a school. Most of our schools today are occupied with dilapidated structures which mostly distracts students from getting proper learning in point of the fact that, the school building might fall on them at any point in time due to its state of disparity. The physical environment/learning space refers to the physical setting of the learner's environment which should evoke positive responses and hold the interests of those who inhabit it (Balog, 2018). From the submission above, it can be deduced that learning cannot be effectively ascertained in an environment that is devoid of infrastructural facilities.

2.3.3. Mental Factors

Mental alertness of students is another important aspect of concern in the classroom learning process. It is expected of the teacher to identify how students respond to learning and their alertness in solving tactical questions. According to Dangara and Regailder (2019), mental factors are attitudes like interest, cheerfulness, and open mindedness etc that are important in the development of personality.

2.3.4. Environmental Factors

The environment in which students learn is another key factor that determines their seriousness in class. For instance, a classroom situated close to the school's rest room and not being hygienic enough for use, one would imagine the kind of hazard that will be coming out. In a related effort, Mudassir and Norsuhaily (2015) conducted a study to examine how school environment influence students' academic performance in selected secondary schools within Kuala Terengganu. The result of the study indicated that students from a school with adequate facilities, good teachers and favorable environment perform better than those from schools with fewer facilities, unqualified teachers and less enabling environment. This is why (Mondal, 2012) noted that environmental factors like classrooms, textbooks, equipment, school supplies, and other instructional materials etc. are the physical conditions needed for learning. It can be deduced from his claim that friendly environment for learning does not only refer to the classroom alone, but other tools needed by student in the class.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research design

According to Hassan et.al (2012), research design is a blue prints of activities or specific action of procedure and strategies to follow so as to obtain the most valid answer to research question or attain the objectives of the study with optional control of various and the make of carefully articulated jet of suggested instruction for the effective of the study. This study was carried out to bring to the fore "critical factors affecting learning environment therefore survey research design is used.

3.2. Method of data collection

This research work used primary and secondary methods of data collection. The primary data included the data collected from the questionnaire administered while the secondary data are extracted from relevant journals, textbooks to substantiate the study

3.3. Hypotheses

Ho: Learning environment in Nigeria has not been affected with critical factors like intellectual, psychological, gender discrimination, environmental and socio-emotional.

Hi: Learning environment in Nigeria has been affected with critical factor like intellectual, psychological, cultural, environmental and socio-emotional challenges.

3.4. Population sample and sampling techniques

The population of the study comprised of all students of Islamic Studies, Political Science and Arabic Department of Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education Otto/Ijanikin Lagos Nigeria. The subset of the population is samples, for the purpose of this study, only 227 students were involved in the administration of the questionnaire for study.

3.5. Estimation techniques

The data collected from the questionnaires administered were presented through frequency percentage counts. Chi-square (X^2) analysis was used for testing the hypotheses and to justify the outcome of the study.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Data Analysis

The table 1 represents the general opinion of the respondents of the issues raised in the study.

Table 1. Contingency Table (Observed Frequency)

S/N	STATEMENTS	SA	A	U	SD	D	TOTAL
1.	Environmental factors is the cause of students funding it difficult to learn in its maxion due to worries that affects their concentration	110	70	8	23	16	227
2.	Most female students excel in their exam due to the fact that they have to the lecturers	102	54	16	30	25	227
3.	Some of the educators don't know what right of expression in the school community means so they do not encourage it	127	63	10	8	19	227
4.	Most educators reward learners based on the monetary instrument received from their wards parents.	92	65	14	47	9	227
5.	The stress learners passed through on daily basis significantly affect their cognitive alertness.	109	60	9	20	29	227
		540	312	57	128	98	1135

Therefore, expected frequency (E) calculated as follow:

$$E = \frac{RT \times CT}{N}$$

Where:

RT = Row total;

CT = column total

N = Grand total.

For SA, $E = \frac{227 \times 540}{1135} = 108$

For A, $E = \frac{227 \times 312}{1135} = 62.4$

For U, $E = \frac{227 \times 57}{1135} = 11.4$

For SD, $E = \frac{227 \times 128}{1135} = 25.6$

For D, $E = \frac{227 \times 98}{1135} = 19.6$

Table 2. Chi-Square (X^2) Analysis Techniques

Responses	Observed	Expected	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
AS	540	108	432	186.624	1.728
A	312	62.4	249.6	62.3	0.90
U	57	11.4	45.6	2.079	0.182
SD	128	25.6	102.4	10.49	0.41
D	98	19.6	78.4	6.15	0.31
					3.53

4.2. Discussion

The above result show that in observed case, chi-square calculated (X_c^2) is 3.53 while chi-square (X_t^2) is 1.425 at 5% levels of significance. This, it revealed that $X_t^2 > X_c^2$, meaning that the observed frequencies differ significantly from the expected frequencies. The implication of the result is that learning environment in Colleges of Education, has been affected with many critical factors. Such as Environmental, Gender, Intellectual, Socio –economical and psychological factors etc. among teachers and learners.

5. Conclusion

Learning environment without no doubt have a great influence on the learning behaviour of students, this would motivate them towards assimilating faster what has been taught in the class. The student will be able to learn fast if there are no distractions weighing them down from the teachers, patents and the environment they live. The study therefore, finds out that educators in this regard, needed to incorporate arsenal of strategies that would inoculate the learners against such negative behaviour by bringing into limelight positive opportunity.

Freedom of expression is another learning skill that form part of the learning environment because it will give room for teachers and learners to interact, share ideas and as well discuss on issue bothering the school and their life. Learners are to be careful in this regard in order not to misuse such opportunity.

Parents that are fond of inducing teachers monetarily in order for their wards to come out in flying colours are to desist from such act and make their children to give in their best to excel in the school and be good ambassadors.

Therefore, this study concluded that learning environment has been affected with critical factors like intellectual, environmental, psychological, cultural and socio-emotional that makes teaching and learning process difficult for

educators and learners. It further concludes that if these factors are being taken care of the learning environment will be friendly for all stakeholders.

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