

SCHOOL VARIABLES AND INTEREST IN SOCIAL STUDIES OF JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN AKWA IBOM SOUTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study sought to determine the relationship between school variables and interest in social studies of junior secondary school students in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District, Nigeria. Five purposes of the study, five research questions and five hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A correlational research design was adopted while the population of the study comprised all the 15,222 junior secondary two (JS2) students in the 63 public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District. A sample size of 375 Junior Secondary Two (JS2) selected for the study. A simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 25 public secondary schools out of 63. Also, hat and draw method of random sampling was used to select 15 students each from of the sampled schools, which gave a total of 375 sampled respondents. The researcher-developed and validated instrument titled "School Variables and Students Interest in Social Studies Questionnaire (SVISSSQ)" were used for data collection. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics was used for data analysis and the results revealed a very high positive and significant relationship between teacher-student interaction, library facilities and students interest in Social Studies in the study area. Conclusion was drawn from the findings while the researcher recommends among other things that, social studies teachers should always maintain a cordial and friendly relationship with the students during the instructional process so as to increase students' interest and motivation towards learning of social studies.

Keywords: School Variables, Interest, Social Studies, Teacher-Student Interaction and Library Facilities.

1 Introduction

Secondary school education is regarded as the cornerstone of educational systems particularly in this 21st century (Adamu, 2015). This level of education is needed to create a bright promising future for both individuals and nation at large. At the Junior Secondary School level, students are expected to learn some basic skills, knowledge,

right attitudes and values that would facilitate effective interaction with people as well as meeting the challenge of life in the social environment. Davis (2010) noted that the social values and morals of the society are taught at this level in a subject like Social Studies so that young ones can become productive and functional in the society. Hence, it is the responsibility of the teachers to make Social Studies lessons interesting to the learners so that their desire to learn and to acquire worthwhile knowledge, skills and values can be achieved.

Social studies are very essential in students' development and improvement of skills, inculcation of right attitude and values in performance of a given task. The primary concern of social studies is to nurture responsible and respectful citizens. Okendu (2012) proposed that through social studies learning, students are enabled to develop their knowledge, skills, interest and adopt new behaviour essential for the survival of social norms and values. In Nigerian context, the goals of social studies curriculum design is aimed at building a sound and balanced mind as a foundation for functional social education directed towards the development of intelligent, responsible and self-directing citizen.

Integrating and dispensing social knowledge through the instrumentality of social studies curriculum design in Nigerian schools is directed towards self-confidence and initiatives, power of imagination and resourcefulness, desire for knowledge and continued learning, sense of compassion for the less fortunate, sense of respect for and tolerance of the opinion of others, social values and attitudes as well as a spirit of national consciousness and patriotism (Garb, Singh, Yusuf and Saad, 2012). Teachers of social studies are expected to make teaching learners'-centered and create enabling environment for students to interact with learning materials in other to sustain their interest towards the subject and concretize their knowledge and skills.

Students' interest in the learning of school subjects is essential for achieving academic success. As noted by Mart (2011), students' interest towards learning can be sustained if the school creates learning environment that is exciting and rewarding. In the secondary school context, students' interest is the willingness or the desire of students to learn certain subject contents and concepts such as social studies. Students' interest is very significant in the learning of social studies because it can hold a student's attention, encourage effort, and support learning. Interest in school subject including social studies is very crucial in achieving great performance among students. For students to show deep interest in Social Studies, teachers must be capable of giving them the necessary assistance in learning and promote class participation. This is because Social Studies is integral to the process of enabling students to develop an understanding of who they are what they want to become and

the society in which they want to live. It helps the students to develop the important values and attitudes, knowledge and understanding, as well as skills necessary for students to become active and responsible citizens.

Adeyemi (2016) noted that in Social Studies teaching, effective utilization of school variables such as proper learning techniques, adequate library facilities, good teacher-student interaction among others, could help to increase students' interest in school subject, increase students' understanding of concepts, principles and facts, and could enable students' to construct meaningful knowledge about the society. These are very necessary because when students understand concepts and principles of a subject, interest and knowledge of such a subject can be increased, constructed, sustained and transferred to a similar situation.

Teacher-student interaction is a component of school variables which may determine students' interest in school subjects. Teacher-student interaction has positive and long-lasting implications for students' interest and motivation towards learning of social studies. For learning to effectively take place, educators and the learners are expected to maintain a cordial and friendly relationship. The kind of behaviour and attitude teachers show in the class should be one that make the students feel accommodated, cared for, loved and gain emotional security (Aboho, Dodo and Isa, 2014). Teachers have to ensure that they meet students' needs, both academically and emotionally by creating the learning environment that promotes positive cultures with healthy interaction. This could increase interest in social studies as a subject, and induce students to achieve their educational goals. Such relationship could be strengthened through friendliness of the teacher with the learners, mutual relationship and understanding based on trust, responding to students' social problems and questions. Thus, it is believed that if teachers take time to build relationship with their students, they can be motivated and show interest in learning.

The nature of library facilities within the school may likely influence students' interest in school subjects. School library is a place where literacy materials are stored. According to Ahmad (2010), visual and audio visual facilities such as counters, television programmes, newspapers, magazines, textbooks and dictionaries among others are often kept in the school library to encourage students to develop proper learning habit. Such materials could enhance students' interest toward reading social studies materials and aid performance of learners. In a condition whereby these materials are not available in schools, learners may find it difficult to develop interest towards social studies.

Addressing these school variables will make teaching and learning of social studies more interesting to students thereby enhance their acquisition of worthwhile knowledge; skills and values that would make them become functional to themselves and the society. Therefore, it is against this backdrop that the researcher seeks to determine the relationship between school variables and interest in social studies of junior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Lack of interest in Social Studies subject has been a serious problem common among secondary school students. In the course of interacting with some students in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District, the researcher usually observed some students complaining that their teachers do not always use instructional materials like newspaper, magazines, charts, posters, video tapes among others in teaching them. Sometimes, it is commonly observed students jumping out through the window on noticing that their social studies teacher is coming to teach. Students most times feel reluctant to copy social studies notes, concentrating and contributing positively during class discussion. These and many other obnoxious attitudes of students toward social studies lessons often lead to poor performance in Social Studies subjects.

Most students within the study area usually complain of the embarrassing nature of interaction they have with their teachers, sometimes through name callings. The students' interest in the subject could be lost when those whom they expected to gain knowledge, skills and experiences are rude, sarcastic, unfair, insult and embarrassing. In view of these conditions, several academic scholars and authors have conducted similar studies on how to sustain students' interest in the study of social studies, but the issue of students' disinterestedness in the learning of the subject still persists. These challenges pose immense concern to the researcher; hence, the resolve to fill this gap by seeking to determine the relationship between school variables and interest in social studies of junior secondary school students in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District, Nigeria.

The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between school variables and students' interest in social studies in junior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District, Nigeria. Specifically, the study aims at the following objectives:

1. To determine the relationship between teacher-student interaction and students' interest in social studies in junior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District.
2. To examine the relationship between library facilities and students' interest in social studies in junior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District.

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between teacher-student interaction and students' interest in social studies in junior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District?
2. What is the relationship between library facilities and students' interest in social studies in junior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District?

The following research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between teacher-student interaction and students' interest in social studies in junior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District.
2. There is no significant relationship between library facilities and students' interest in social studies in junior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District.

The study was delimited to school variables and students' interest in social studies in junior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District, Nigeria. School variables studied were teacher-student interaction and library facilities. Specifically, the population of the study covered only Junior Secondary Two (JS2) students of 2020/2021 school year.

2 Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of School Variables

School variables remain an important area that should be studied and well managed to enhance students' interest in school subject. Social variables encompass all resources human and materials, programmes and opportunities, that enhances students' ability to learn and to develop their potentials (Oduwaye, 2011). It is the surrounding circumstance which affects learning. A school environment is the condition and influence which a learner comes in contact with, resulting in a series of complex interactions and ensuring a permanent change in behaviour. This implies that an individual's acquisition of skills, knowledge and competencies would occur in the school environment.

According to Aina (2015), a school environment has advantage of fostering desirable behaviour and attitude, developing problem solving, skills and creative thought, encouraging students' interrelationship and fostering-centred methods. Tshui and Cai (2011) added that the school is an environment in which students can learn norms, values, and expectations that support people's feelings socially, emotionally and physically safe. A sustainable positive school environment fosters youth

development and learning necessary for a productive, contributing and satisfying life in a democratic society.

2.2 Concept of Social Studies and Interest

Social Studies is the subject in junior secondary schools that can assist students to acquire the basic knowledge, skills and positive attitudes needed to be responsible citizens and contributing members of society. According to Alberta (2010), the goals of social studies curriculum in Nigeria is aimed at building a sound and balanced mind as a foundation for functional social education directed towards the development of intelligent, responsible and self-directing citizen. In a different opinion of Davis (2010), one important purpose of social studies is helping young people to develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of culturally diverse democratic society in an independent world. Hence, it can be said that social studies subject can enable learners to become nationally conscious, better informed and effective citizens. Students need to develop strong interest for social studies subject if they are to imbibe the right type values, skills and attitudes for self and national survival.

Interest could be defined as the focusing of the sense organs on or giving attention to some person, activity, situation or object. McClnerney, Dowson, Young and Nelson (2010) viewed interest as a condition in which an individual associates the essence of certain things or situation with his needs or wants. According to Schiefele (2018), interest is a feeling of identification with a person and some conditions, things or other persons. Therefore, interest in social studies is measured by increased attention of the students, concentration, and willingness to learn and to acquire knowledge.

2.3 Teacher-Student Interaction and Students' Interest in Social Studies

Teacher-student interaction is a process in which the teacher and students can cooperate together to make the learning and teaching process become well and produce good outcomes. Teacher-student interaction can take place between the teacher and the whole class, the teacher and the group of students. As noted by Zhang (2012), interaction between teacher and the students is very crucial to promote students' communicative activities and also create good classroom atmosphere where students are motivated and interested to learn. Teacher-student interaction actually provides the learners the opportunity to express themselves within a broad spectrum and participate more in social discourses with the teachers.

Teacher-student interaction is one of the primary means by which learning is accomplished in classrooms. In social studies classes, Hall and Walsh (2012) stated that positive interaction between the teacher and the students helps in building

confidence and interest towards learning. It helps to create mutual understandings of their roles and relationships, and the norms and expectations of their involvement as members in their classrooms. Through interactions with their teachers, students are socialized into particular understandings of what counts as the official curriculum and of themselves as learners of the subject matter. The patterns of interaction between teachers and the students also help define the norms by which individual student achievement is assessed. Students draw upon these patterns and norms to participate in subsequent classroom activities, thereby enhancing their interest in social studies.

Aboho, Dodo and Isa (2014) investigated teacher-student class interaction on the academic interest and performance of senior secondary school students in Economics in Benue State, Nigeria. One of the major findings showed that teacher-students relationship has insignificant impact on the academic interest and performance of students in Economics. Owodunni (2015) supported in his findings that teacher-student classroom interaction significantly influences students' interest, motivation and achievement in basic electricity.

2.4 Library Facilities and Students Interest in Social Studies

Library is considered as an important input needed to facilitate students' interest in school subjects such as social studies. Library facilities are very significant in accelerating the implementation of educational programmes. According to Lance and Hofschire (2012), availability of functional school library provides additional reading opportunities for students, thus improve their knowledge, writing skills, reading skills, clarity of expression and interest towards learning. Oji and Abana (2012) supports that provision of library facilities increases students interest in school subjects, such that learners cannot acquire knowledge only through classrooms, they need to consult library materials to add to what the teacher has taught them.

Adeyemi (2010) argued that the student intellectual development is linked to constant use of library resources. Thus, library is meant to fulfill students' information needs because it is more convenient for students to collect reading materials from the school library. Farmer (2013) added that when library facilities are accessible and are enable to consult by the students, the desire to learn and perform better in school subjects will be sustained. When library facilities are available students will be confidence to inquire for more ideas and knowledge after classroom discussion, thereby increasing their interest and desire for learning.

Popoola and Haliso (2019) described library facilities as those information bearing materials in both print and electronic formats, such as textbooks, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspapers and magazines, reports, CD-ROM databases, internet /E-mail, video tapes/ cassettes, diskettes, magnetic disk, computers, micro forms among others. These information materials are the raw materials that are supposed to be provided in school libraries in order to enhance students' academic progress, interest and achievement. Frascotti, Levenseler, Weingarten and Wiegand (2010) agreed that students' interest in school subjects is most likely to be developing if library facilities are provided to take care of assignment and access information through the use of the internet. Chukwueke, Onuoha and Nnadozie (2018) conducted a research on effect of library services on the educational development of secondary school students in Abia State: A study of Igbere secondary school, Igbere. One of the major findings showed that availability of library facilities significantly enhances students interest in school subjects. Yusuf, Zahyah and Muhajir (2018) added in their findings that students interest in learning were decrease due to lack of adequate library facilities.

3 Research Method

3.1 Design of the Study

The correlational research design was used for the study. This design is used whenever the researcher wants to find out the magnitude and direction of relationship that exists between the dependent and independent variables (Crawford, 2014). Therefore, this design was considered suitable for this study because it enabled the researcher to measure the interrelationship between school variables and interest in social studies of junior secondary schools' students in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District, Nigeria.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population for the study comprised all the 15,222 junior secondary two (JS2) students in the 63 public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District (Directorate of Planning and Research Statistics, Akwa Ibom State Secondary Education Board, Uyo, 2021).

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 375 Junior Secondary Two (JS2) selected for the study. This sample size was determine using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling principle which states that if the population is between 15,000 and 20,000, a sample size of 375 will be representative of the population. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 25 public secondary schools out of 63. This was done with the help of lottery method of random sampling, which permits each member of the population to be assigned a number on a piece of paper, blindfolded and mixed up in

small container, after which the required number for the desired sample size were selected randomly. Thereafter, random sampling method (hat and draw) was used to select 15 students from each of the sampled schools, which gave a total of 375 sampled respondents.

3.4 Instrumentation

The researcher-developed and validated instrument titled “School Variables and Students Interest in Social Studies Questionnaire (SVISSSQ) were used for data collection. The SVISSSQ had two sections. Section A contained 25 items, 5 each on school variables while section B contained 15 items measuring students’ interest in social studies. SVISSSQ were measured in a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1

3.5 Validation of the Instrument

The instruments were given to three experts to assess its face validity. Two of the experts were from Measurement and Evaluation unit and one from Social Studies unit of the Department of Educational Foundations, Guidance and Counseling, Faculty of Education, University of Uyo. The inputs and corrections made by the experts together with that of the researcher’s supervisor were used to form the final copy of the instrument for administration.

3.6 Reliability of the Instrument

To establish the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha reliability technique was used. Here, the instrument was administered on 40 JS2 students in a selected school not included in the sample population. Data collected were subjected to correlation and Cronbach Alpha statistics was applied for test of internal consistency of the instrument. This yielded the overall reliability index of .80 for school variables and .88 for items measuring students’ interest in Social Studies. This index according to Udoh and Joseph (2005) is a very high reliability index since reliability co-efficient is above .50. Therefore, the instrument was deemed reliable for use in the study

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

Data generated were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics. In answering the research questions, the r-value or the correlation value was used to determine the magnitude or weight of the relationship between variables; whereas in testing the hypotheses, the r-value was compared with the critical value so as to determine the significance of the relationship between variables all at .05 level of significance. The research questions were answered using the decision rule presented by Nunnally (2011) as follows:

Coefficient (r)	- Relationship	
1.00		} Positive
$\pm .71$ to $\pm .99$	- Very high positive relationship	
$\pm .50$ to $\pm .70$	- High positive relationship	
$\pm .35$ to $\pm .49$	- Average or moderate positive relationship	
$\pm .33$ to $\pm .34$	- Weak positive relationship	
$\pm .10$ to $\pm .22$	- Very weak positive relationship	

4 Results and Discussion of Findings

4.1 Research Question 1

What is the relationship between teacher-student interaction and interest in social studies of junior secondary school students in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District?

Table 1: Correlation analysis of responses between teacher-student interaction and interest in social studies of junior secondary school students

Variables	N	$\Sigma x \Sigma$	$\Sigma x^2 \Sigma y^2$	Σxy	r-value	Remark
Library facilities (x) 83	375	5426	76884	73553	0.74	Very high positive relationship
Students Interest in SocialStudies(y)	375	5494	74718			

Researcher's Field Work (2021)

Result in Table 1 shows a correlation value of 0.86. From the decision rule, it is noticed that a very high positive relationship exists between teacher-student interaction and interest in social studies of junior secondary school students in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District. The implication of this result is that students are most likely be motivated and exercise deep interest in social studies if both the teacher and the students cooperate together, maintain friendly gestures and the students are allowed to take active part in the learning process.

4.2 Research Question 2

What is the relationship between library facilities and interest in social studies of junior secondary school students in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District?

Table 2: Correlation analysis of responses between library facilities and interest in social studies of junior secondary school students

Variables	N	$\sum x \sum y$	$\sum x^2 \sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-value	Remark
Library facilities (x)	375	5426	76884	73553	0.74	Very high positive relationship
Students Interest in SocialStudies(y)	375	5494	74718			

Researcher's Field Work (2021)

Result in Table 2 shows a correlation value of 0.74. From the decision rule, it is noticed that a very high positive relationship exists between library facilities and interest in social studies of junior secondary school students in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District. The implication of this result is that students are most likely to cultivate deep interest in social studies if library facilities are available in schools for their usage and vice versa.

4.3 Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between teacher-student interaction and interest in social studies of junior secondary school students in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis between teacher-student interaction and interest in social studies of junior secondary school students

Variables	N	$\sum x \sum y$	$\sum x^2 \sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-value	r-critical	Decision
Teacher-Student Interaction (x)	375	5416	76984	75237	0.86*	0.194	RejectHo
Students Interest in SocialStudies(y)	375	5494	74718				

Note: * Significant $P < .05$; $df = 373$; critical $r = 0.194$

Table 3 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.86 is greater than the critical value of 0.194 at the degree of freedom of 373 and at .05 significant levels. Hence, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected, while the alternate hypothesis is retained. This implies that there is a significant relationship between teacher-student interaction and

interest in social studies of junior secondary school students in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between library facilities and interest in social studies of junior secondary school students in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis between library facilities and interest in social studies of junior secondary school students

Variables	N	$\sum x \sum y$	$\sum x^2 \sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-value	r-critical	Decision
Teacher-Student Interaction (x)	375	5426	76884	73553	0.74*	0.194	RejectHo
Students Interest in SocialStudies (y)	375	5494	74718				

Note: * Significant $P < .05$; $df = 373$; critical $r = 0.194$

Table 4 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.74 is greater than the critical value of 0.194 at the degree of freedom of 373 and at .05 significant levels. Hence, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected, while the alternate hypothesis is retained. This implies that there is a significant relationship between library facilities and interest in social studies of junior secondary school students in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

The researcher made a combined discussion of findings from the research questions and hypotheses of the study.

Teacher-Student Interaction and Interest in Social Studies of Junior Secondary School Students

Results from the research question one and hypothesis one revealed a very high positive and significant relationship between teacher-student interaction and interest in social studies of junior secondary school students in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District. This finding corroborates the finding of the study conducted Aboho, Dodo and Isa (2014). The authors found that teacher-students' relationship has significant impact on the academic interest and performance of students in Economics. This finding also agrees with the finding of the study conducted by Owodunni (2015), who found a significant influence of teacher-student classroom interaction on students'

interest, motivation and achievement in basic electricity. Hence, it is observed from this finding that the nature of teacher-student classroom interaction determines the level of interest in social studies subjects. It is also observed that positive interaction between the teachers and the students helps in building student's confidence and interest towards learning.

Library Facilities and Interest in Social Studies of Junior Secondary School Students

Results from the research question two and hypothesis two revealed a very high positive and significant relationship between library facilities and interest in social studies of junior secondary school students in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District. This finding corroborates the finding of the study conducted Chukwueke, Onuoha and Nnadozie (2018), which finding showed that availability of library facilities significantly enhances students interest in school subjects. Also, this finding is in tandem with the finding of the study conducted by Yusuf, Zahyah and Muhajir (2018). The authors found that students' interest in learning were decreased due to lack of adequate library facilities. Therefore, it is observed from this finding that lack of adequate library facilities could make students' loose interest in social studies. It is also noted availability of library facilities enhances students' ability to read and consistently perform better in social studies. Library facilities can lead to a higher students' achievement and make students develop interest towards perform critical tasks in social studies.

5 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn.

Teacher-student interaction has a strong association with students' interest in Social Studies. Students are most likely to develop high interest for Social Studies lessons if the teacher creates good classroom atmosphere where students are given the opportunity to express themselves or participate more in class discussion. In addition, the provision of library facilities increases students' interest in Social Studies. This is because when library facilities are available, students would be confident to inquire for more ideas and knowledge after class discussion, thereby increasing their interest and desire for learning the subject.

5.2 Recommendation

Based on the finding of the study, it is therefore recommended that;

1. Social studies teachers should always maintain a cordial and friendly

- relationship with the students during the instructional process so as to increase students' interest and motivation towards learning of social studies.
2. Akwa Ibom State government should ensure that secondary schools within the state are well equipped with library facilities so as to encourage students' reading, motivation and interest for school subjects.
 3. Students should assist one another in developing positive academic interest by sharing in group discussion particularly on educational matters.

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