
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND STUDENTS' VARIABLES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT: *This study investigated the relationship between learning environment and SS2 students' variables in English language in Ebonyi State. Specifically, the study investigated the issues of school learning environment as it relates to SS 2 students' achievement in English language and attitude towards the subject. The study utilized the correlation research design. Through the purposive random sampling technique a sample size of 540 English language students were used for the study. Three instruments were used to elicit information from the respondents; English achievement Test and a structured questionnaire. The instruments were face validated by experts and yielded the following reliability co-efficient of 0.76 using Cronbach Alpha for school learning environment; the English Achievement Test yielded a reliability co-efficient of 0.78 using Pearson Product Moment Correlation while the instrument on attitude yielded 0.63 using Cronbach Alpha. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while regression was used to test the hypotheses. Findings of the study showed that there is a significant relationship between the school learning environment and students' achievement in English language. The study also found a significant relationship between the learning environment and students' attitude towards English language. Based on these findings, one of the recommendations was that Government and stakeholder in the education industry should improve the school-learning environment by rebuilding, repainting and renovating all the dilapidated school buildings to make them more attractive and conducive for learning so that students' achievement in English language will improve. Social infrastructures necessary for effective teaching and learning of the English language should also be provided.*

KEYWORDS: learning environment, achievement, attitude

INTRODUCTION

The importance of English language in the Nigerian education system cannot be over-emphasized. Though it is a foreign language, it is being used as a second language (L2) and the language of instruction in Nigerian schools especially at the secondary and tertiary levels. Anoma (2005), observes that Nigerian secondary school students have problems in learning the English language as revealed in their performance at external examinations. Many of the students normally pass other subjects at excellent performance but without a credit pass in English language. This is reflected in the large number of candidates who fail the West African Senior School Certificate (WAEC) English examination every year. The concern now is the poor use of the language, which really manifests in the poor performance of the students in the examinations conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO), (Babalola & Onyinloye, 2011). It is a common

knowledge that most of these students find it difficult to communicate freely in the language and this deficiency is observed in spoken English, reading and written English, the major avenue through which they are tested for the award of certificate of proficiency in the language is negatively affected.

Adeosun (2004) & Ogunsaju (2004) revealed that most secondary schools record an abysmal failure in English in the annual release of the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) results. For instance, poor achievement in English is reflected in the large number of candidates who fail the WAEC School Certificate English examination every year as shown in the WAEC results between 2009 and 2019 in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of the Statistics of Achievement of Nigerian Students in English Language

May/ June WASSCE in Nigeria from 2009 to 2019

YEA R	TOTAL SAT	NO. & % OF PASSES AT	PERCENTAGE OF
2009	1355725	563294	41.55
2010	1307745	459404	35.13
2011	154250	472906	30.70
2012	1540250	649156	38.81
2013	1543683	616370	38.68
2014	1605613	529405	31.28
2015	1498069	616370	38.68
2016	1552758	878040	52.97
2017	1471151	923486	59.22
2018	1572396	786016	49.98
2019	1590173	102051	64.18

Source: WAEC Report (2019), WAEC Head Office, Yaba, Lagos State

From the table of statistics above, students who passed English language with four other subjects showed little improvement within the ten years of study. One can observe a steady increase in the failure rate from 2009 to 2015 with 23.23% , 31.02%, 70%, 61.19%, 61.32, 70%, 61.32,47.03, 40.78, 50.02% and 30%. In summary, the percentage of students with A1-C6 from 2009 -2019 has never been up to 70% and the failure rate kept getting worse and worse. This is certainly a critical problem that needs an urgent attention.

Consequently, Akwanya (2009) attributes the low performance of Nigerian students in English language to factors like poor school environment and poor attitude of both teachers and students. Similarly, classroom learning environments and other school factors exert some dominant influence on learners since man is a product of his environment. The deplorable condition under which students learn in secondary schools calls for immediate attention. Nothing is done to upgrade and maintain schools, equip laboratories with modern instruments, populate the libraries with good books, make the dormitories homely and comfortable, and pay teachers salaries. This is why most teachers are divided between teaching and operating business outside the school. The resultant effect is that teachers end up graduating students who are academically deficient and the standard of education in the country keeps going down the drain.

According to Agwu (2005), our education system is facing a very serious crisis because of environmental problem. The schools, especially the ones owned and run by the government are poorly staffed, with dilapidated buildings and very untidy environments. He observes that the classrooms are often vandalized and there is also the absence of essential teaching and learning materials. According to him, the level of neglect of this vital arm of the education system is so much that one begins to wonder if the country has an education system at all. Similarly, Aduwa-Ogiegbaen (2010) also blames the problem on the poor state of the physical facilities in the schools. He observes that most of the school buildings are poor and made worse by over-crowding. He further observes that many schools have dilapidated buildings with leaking roofs and cracked walls and are still being used for classroom activities. Hence, Obong, Okey, Aruah & Okobia (2010) states that the physical outlook of a learning environment is very important in contributing to a healthy academic exercise.

Similarly, Ajayi, Ekundayo & Osalusi (2010) also observe that a number of schools around the country are still languishing in the old architectural designs with crumbling walls and limited resources. A cursory look at the learning environment in the secondary schools shows that many of the classrooms, laboratories, examination halls, libraries and office furniture are in a terrible state and in need of repairs. Most schools have no toilet facilities and the dormitories are rat infested and reeking of filth and squalor. During the rainy season, it is common to see classrooms and dormitories with leaking roofs, cracked walls and roofs blown off, making the students very uncomfortable. According to them, it is obvious that the entire unattractive physical structure of the school buildings and compounds would likely generate a negative attitude among learners to achieve academically. Teachernet (2008) also observe that the surroundings in which students learn can greatly influence their academic performance and well-being. Similarly, Onyeachu (2009) observes that most secondary schools in Nigeria have dilapidated buildings, leaking roofs, inadequate tables and chairs for students use creating room for poor achievement and negative attitude in the students. Hence, Fakeye (2010), maintains that a conducive learning environment can have effect on both the attitude and achievement of students. Therefore a situation where students lack the zeal to learn and skip classes due to the entire unattractive and boring environment is clearly a problem that needs urgent intervention. With inadequate planning for the expected population explosion in schools, over-crowded classrooms now become a permanent feature of an academic settings at all levels of the education system.

Hence, Lynch (2010) observes that the number of learners in a class can range from multitudes of 35 or forty or even fifty or more learners packed into a learning situation. This is the sad truth in many Nigerian classrooms especially in major towns and cities. Thus, the phenomenon of overcrowded classrooms as well as poor quality and inadequate furniture in the classrooms due to unlimited expansion has taken its toll on the educational system. Ajayi, Ekundayo & Osalusi (2010) observe that the learning environment in secondary schools show that many of the classrooms, laboratories, examination halls, libraries and office furniture are in a terrible state in need of repairs. Most windows have no louver blades thereby causing hazard to life. Various research studies has shown that the school learning environment are positively related to students academic achievement.,(Okoza, Aluede & Akpaيدا 2012), (Ayeni & Adelabu 2012). On the other hand, Ona & Ugwu (2010) observe that school learning environment and interest of students had no significant effect on students performance.

According to Fakeye (2010), one major reason why students fail English language woefully in the yearly school certificate examination is the poor attitude of some English language teachers to work and students' lack of enthusiasm and interest in the subject. According to him, students' attitude to the language is one of the personal variables that affect the learning of English language. Therefore, developing favourable attitude as a means of enhancing achievement in the learning of English language in the students is of utmost importance. The attitude of the learner towards the language learning matters a lot, if the learner is going to gain the mastery of the subject for a better achievement.

According to Adebisi (2006), attitudes are positive or negative feelings an individual holds about objects or ideas. The achievement of any learner will to a great extent depend on his attitude towards the learning materials. Nia & Abbaspour (2010) observe that the learners attitude towards foreign language learning and success in learning a foreign language are highly related. Hussain (2011) also found a positive correlation between classroom learning environment and attitude to English language. Gardener & Lambert (1972) observe that success in mastering a second language depends not so much on intellectual capacity or language aptitude as on learner's attitude towards the particular language. According to them, attitude could help the language learning process by changing students' orientation towards particular linguistic cultural groups and thereby modify their motivation to learn that language. Similarly, Olanipekun (2013) observes that a teachers' attitude and effectiveness in a particular subject are more important determinants of students' attitudes and achievement in that subject and English is not an exception. It is therefore obvious that a positive attitude towards English language accounts for success in learning it. Students' attitude is therefore one of such variables that affect the learning of the language. Hence, a favourable attitude must be developed in the students as a means of enhancing achievement in the subject. This is because factors that produce poor achievement may in turn produce negative attitude to the subject. Adebisi in Fakeye (2010) posits that attitudes are positive or negative feelings that an individual holds about objects or ideas and the achievement of any learner will to a great extent depend on his attitude towards the learning materials. According to him, a positive attitude more often than not leads to a successful learning.

With the issue of low achievement in English language recorded by Nigerian students in WAEC Senior secondary school Certificate examination, this study tries to find out whether

such a factor as the school learning environment is a determinant of students' learning outcomes of achievement and attitude to English language.

Statement of the Problem

English language occupies a very important position in the Nigerian school curriculum. It is the official language of the country and serves as the only medium of instruction in all the schools in Nigeria. Moreover, a credit pass in English language is a pre-requisite for gaining admission into any tertiary institution and a ticket for securing white-collar job. However, most secondary schools record an abysmal failure rate in English language in the annual release of the West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE) results and many students are delayed from gaining admission into the university due to failure in obtaining a credit pass in English. Hence, the outcry over poor performance in English language in the country. Poor achievement in English language has been blamed on so many factors such as lack of qualified English language teachers, lack of modern instructional technology, deplorable school and classroom learning environment, negative attitude of the language teachers to work, etc.

The sad truth of many schools in Ebonyi State is that many classes are overcrowded, registering up to 50 students in a class without adequate provision of chairs and desks. Most of the school buildings are dilapidated and often in shambles which make the schools dull and unattractive. The classrooms and staff rooms are usually inadequate with leaking roofs, damaged ceilings, cracked walls, broken doors and windows. In most schools one finds heaps of refuse uncontrollably dumped haphazardly with the environment reeking in filth and squalor. Also, some of the schools have no toilet facilities and school facilities such as libraries, language laboratories are far from being adequate. The whole scenario of the school system is worrisome. The problem of this study, therefore is to find out whether there is a relationship between the school learning environment and variables of achievement and attitude towards English language among SS2 students in Ebonyi state.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between school learning environment and students' achievement in English language and attitude towards English language. Specifically, the study sought to find out whether:

1. There is relationship between school learning environment and students' achievement in English language.
2. There is a relationship between school learning environment and attitude of the students' to English language.

Significance of the Study

This study would be of immense value to the following stakeholders: government, students, teachers, curriculum planners and textbook writers and future researcher. The findings of this study would be beneficial to government as a stakeholder in the education sector as they could devise ways of improving the learning environment obtained in Nigerian schools. Most schools have dilapidated buildings with no or little educational facilities. It is not uncommon to see learning taking place under the trees due to lack of classrooms. They could give priority to the improvement of the state of the learning environment by building more classrooms and renovating the dilapidated ones. The findings of this study would also make

the government to see the importance of painting school buildings, providing spacious and well ventilated classrooms, language laboratory, well equipped library, locating school buildings in noiseless zones free from trespassers, so as to make students perform better in external examinations.

The findings would also provide empirical information on the learning environment of schools in Ebonyi State in teaching English language and how the variable determines students' attitude and overall achievement in school certificate examination. The findings of this study would also be of immense value to students in Ebonyi State, as expositions from it would be utilized in improving the learning environment of our schools as a means of developing a positive attitude and a better achievement in English language among the students. Teachers would see the need to involve students in arranging things in an appealing way in their classrooms. This study will stress the importance of enhancing the school environment where teachers teach and how teachers could use modern instructional materials in developing positive attitude towards English language among their students so that they will perform better in external examinations.

Curriculum planners may utilize the findings of this study and include the study of Nigerian English in the English language curriculum of teachers' preparation programmes in Faculties and Colleges of Education in the country. Curriculum planners can use the findings of this study to make English language curriculum more learner-oriented by advocating for better learning environment.

Scope of the Study

This study was delimited to investigation of the relationship between learning environment and achievement and attitude of SS 2 students in the English language in all the secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How does school learning environment relate to students' achievement in English language?
2. How does learning environment relate to students' attitude towards English language?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance in the study.

HO₁ There is no significant relationship between the learning environment and students' achievement in the English language.

HO₂ There is no significant relationship between learning environment and students' attitude towards the English language.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research study adopted a correlational research design. According to Rybarova (2006), a correlation study is one that measures two or more variables, as they exist naturally. The goal is to establish that a relationship exists between variables. The study focused on whether the school learning environment determines students' achievement and attitude in English

language. The study was carried out in secondary schools in Ebonyi State. Ebonyi State is made up of 13 Local Government Areas and is located at the South/Eastern part of Nigeria. The state is bordered on the East by Cross River State, on the North by Benue State, on the West by Enugu State and on the South by Abia State. The study is necessary in this area of study, as it would help to provide empirical indices to ascertain whether the problem of school learning environment determines SS 2 students' learning outcomes of achievement and attitude in English language.

The population of the study comprised all the 28000 English language SS2 students in the 217 public secondary schools in Ebonyi state (Ebonyi State Ministry of Education; 2016). The sample size for the study consisted of 540 students. From the 13 Local Government Areas, five (5) secondary schools were selected from each school, making a total of 65 schools. Then, 9 students were selected through the purposive random sampling technique from each school making a total of 585 students. But after data collection, the sample was reduced to 540 respondents due to some incompletely filled questionnaires.

The instruments used for this study were two structured questionnaire and an English Language Achievement Test. The copies of the instrument solicited responses on:

- i. The school-learning environment questionnaire.
- ii. Students' attitude towards English language Questionnaire
- iv. English language Achievement Test;

The instruments were subjected to face validation by three experts. These included one expert in the Measurement and Evaluation as well as two specialists in language education; all from Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. They vetted the items of the instrument in terms of clarity of language construction, understanding of the items by the respondents and adequacy of the number of items. Re-structuring was made to the items of the instruments but no item was dropped and the amendments were effected as recommended and thereafter, the final drafts of the instruments were produced.

The 30 item instrument on school learning environment was administered to 30 respondents in a field testing. Data were collected and used to compute reliability coefficient using Cronbach Alpha Approach. A reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained showing that the instrument was reliable. The 20-item English Language Achievement Test was given to 30 students in a field testing. Their answers were scored and data kept. Then, after two weeks the same test but in a different paper colour was administered to the same students and their answers scored. The two separate scores were correlated in a test-retest approach using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to determine the reliability coefficient, which was obtained as 0.78 and adjudged reliable.

The attitude instrument made up of 40 items was administered to thirty students in a trial testing, in order to determine the item loading by factor analysis. Based on extraction on five factors, twenty items were poorly loaded and were eliminated/dropped. The remaining twenty items therefore constituted the final instrument. The twenty-item instrument responses were collated after administration and data obtained were used to compute the reliability

coefficient using Cronbach Alpha Approach. A reliability coefficient of 0.63 was obtained, suggesting that the instrument was reliable.

A total of 585 copies of instrument were distributed. The researcher employed the services of seven research assistants who were trained on the techniques of administration and collection of the questionnaire. The researcher also acted as the overall supervisor of the whole exercise of instrument administration and data collection. The respondents were encouraged to complete the questionnaire on the spot for collection in order to ensure maximum return. However, a total of 540 copies of the instrument were retrieved, and certified correctly completed. Data collected were analyzed based on information obtained from correctly completed questionnaire. The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to for research questions while regression was used to test the hypotheses.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

How does school learning environment relate to students' achievement in English language?

Table 2: Mean Result of how Learning Environment relates to Students' Achievement in English Language

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	SD	Interpret	
1.	My school compound is decorated with beautiful flowers.	23	79	344	94	\bar{X} 2.05	0.69	Not accepted
2.	The school buildings are old, dilapidated and in dare need of repairs.	255	253	17	15	3.38	0.68	Accept
3.	The classrooms in my school are overcrowded with more than 30 students in a class.	243	284	22	0	3.39	0.56	Accept
4.	Students can hardly see the blackboard during English language lessons.	269	257	9	5	3.46	0.58	Accept
5.	We do not have enough classrooms in the school	102	413	17	8	3.72	0.51	Accept
6.	The classrooms in my school are adequate for teaching and learning.	16	251	257	16	2.49	0.60	Not accepted
7.	My school has adequate provision of chairs, desks, tables and blackboards.	41	71	410	18	2.25	0.63	Not accepted
8.	Teachers movement is restricted to the front of the class because students lockers blocked every space	171	272	76	21	3.89	0.77	Accepted
9.	The classrooms in my	174	311	31	24	3.17	0.72	Accepted

	school have no good light and ventilation.							
10.	My school is located in a busy and noisy street/area.	91	369	61	19	2.98	0.72	Accepted
11.	Noise from outside the classrooms often leads to loss of concentration when teaching/learning is going on.	130	380	18	12	3.16	0.58	Accepted
12.	Passersby often trespass through the school compound.	101	385	46	8	3.07	0.57	Accepted
13.	The school is not fenced.	57	455	16	12	3.03	0.47	Accepted
14.	The school-learning environment is dirty, congested and noisy.	133	201	179	27	2.81	0.86	Accepted
15.	The school has a functional library that is well stocked with relevant books and has adequate space for reading.	50	17	400	73	2.08	0.72	Not accepted
16.	The school has a language laboratory.	8	31	234	267	1.89	0.66	Not accepted
17.	The school has a computer room with modern computers.	29	29	118	364	1.48	0.82	Not accepted
18.	Teachers use instructional aids frequently to teach English lesson.	26	29	251	234	1.71	0.77	Not accepted
19.	Lessons are made more interesting and appealing with the help of instructional aids	146	360	29	5	3.99	0.56	Accepted
20.	The furniture in my school is not comfortable for proper sifting of students my school has access to interest services.	34	458	34	14	2.94	0.47	Accepted
21.	Teachers use magazines, newspapers and supplementary texts to teach English language	16	145	321	58	2.22	0.66	Not accepted
22.	Students who disturb in the class are usually punished severely or sent away.	38	426	57	19	2.89	0.55	Accepted
23.	The toilet facilities in the school are adequate and	16	29	453	42	2.03	0.49	Not accepted

	clean.							
24.	The school has enough recreational facilities	44	21	103	373	1.51	0.90	Not accepted
25.	The school facilities are well maintained.	19	107	321	93	2.09	0.70	Not accepted
26.	There is a cordial relationship between teachers and students.	91	419	29	1	3.91	0.47	Accepted
27.	Students relate very well with one another	83	386	15	56	2.91	0.76	Accepted
28.	The school environment is well secured and free from external threat.	11	102	420	7	2.21	0.47	Not accepted
29.	Rules concerning cleanliness are constantly applied in the school.	21	166	331	22	2.80	0.62	Not accepted
30.	The school environment provides an atmosphere conducive to learning.	13	113	391	23	2.21	0.55	Not accepted
	Grand mean					2.73		Accepted

From the result on Table 2, respondents agree that learning environment relates to students' achievement in English language. Therefore, the grand mean of 2.73 supports the view of the respondents that learning environment relates to the achievement of students' in English language.

Again, the correlation of learning environment and achievement gives a positive value ($t = 22.06$) in table 3 indicating that learning environment has a relationship with students' achievement in English language and lack of conducive learning environment is a critical problem to teaching and learning English language.

Table 3: Nature of Contribution to the Result

Variable	B	SE of B	Beta	T	Sig
Constants	71.0871	3.2223		22.061	0.0000
learning environment Vs students achievement	0.2701	0.0441	0.2592	6.115	0.0000

Research Question 2

How does learning environment relate to students' attitude towards learning of English Language?

Table 4: Mean Results on how Learning Environment relates to Students Attitude in the English Language

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	SD	Interpret
1.	My school compound is decorated with beautiful flowers.	23	79	344	94	2.05	0.69	Not accepted
2.	The school buildings are old, dilapidated and in dire need of repairs.	255	253	17	15	3.38	0.68	Accepted
3.	The classrooms in my school are overcrowded with more than 30 students in a class.	243	284	22	0	3.39	0.56	Accepted
4.	Students can hardly see the blackboard during English language lessons.	269	257	9	5	3.46	0.58	Accepted
5.	We do not have enough classrooms in the school	102	413	17	8	3.72	0.51	Accept
6.	The classrooms in my school are adequate for teaching and learning.	16	251	257	16	2.49	0.60	Not accepted
7.	My school has adequate provision of chairs, desks, tables and blackboards.	41	71	410	18	2.25	0.63	Not accepted
8.	Teachers movement is restricted to the front of the class because students lockers blocked every space	171	272	76	21	3.89	0.77	Accepted
9.	The classrooms in my school have no good light and ventilation.	174	311	31	24	3.17	0.72	Accepted
10.	My school is located in a busy and noisy street/area.	91	369	61	19	2.98	0.72	Accepted
11.	Noise from outside the classrooms often leads to loss of concentration when teaching/learning is going on.	130	380	18	12	3.16	0.58	Accepted
12.	Passersby often trespass through the school compound.	101	385	46	8	3.07	0.57	Accepted
13.	The school is not fenced.	57	455	16	12	3.03	0.47	Accepted
14.	The school-learning environment is dirty,	133	201	179	27	2.81	0.86	Accepted

	congested and noisy.							
15.	The school has a functional library that is well stocked with relevant books and has adequate space for reading.	50	17	400	73	2.08	0.72	Not accepted
16.	The school has a language laboratory.	8	31	234	267	1.89	0.66	Not accepted
17.	The school has a computer room with modern computers.	29	29	118	364	1.48	0.82	Not accepted
18.	Teachers use instructional aids frequently to teach English lesson.	26	29	251	234	1.71	0.77	Not accepted
19.	Lessons are made more interesting and appealing with the help of instructional aids	146	360	29	5	3.99	0.56	Accepted
20.	The furniture in my school is not comfortable for proper sitting of students my school has access to interest services.	34	458	34	14	2.94	0.47	Accepted
21.	Teachers use magazines, newspapers and supplementary texts to teach English language	16	145	321	58	2.22	0.66	Not accepted
22.	Students who disturb in the class are usually punished severely or sent away.	38	426	57	19	2.89	0.55	Accepted
23.	The toilet facilities in the school are adequate and clean.	16	29	453	42	2.03	0.49	Not accepted
24.	The school has enough recreational facilities	44	21	103	373	1.51	0.90	Not accepted
25.	The school facilities are well maintained.	19	107	321	93	2.09	0.70	Not accepted
26.	There is a cordial relationship between teachers and students.	91	419	29	1	3.91	0.47	Accepted
27.	Students relate very well with one another	83	386	15	56	2.91	0.76	Accepted
28.	The school environment is well secured and free from external threat.	11	102	420	7	2.21	0.47	Not accepted
29.	Rules concerning cleanliness are constantly applied in the school.	21	166	331	22	2.80	0.62	Not accepted
30.	The school environment provides an atmosphere conducive to learning.	13	113	391	23	2.21	0.55	Not accepted

Grand mean	2.73	Accepted
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From the results on table 4, respondents agree that learning environment relates to students' attitude towards English language. Even the grand mean of 2.73 buttressed the view of the respondents that learning environment determines students' attitude towards English language. Also the correlation of learning environment and attitude to English language gives a positive value ($T=13.218$) in table 5, indicating that learning environment relates to students' attitude to English language.

Table 5: Nature of Contribution to the Result

Variable	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient		
	B	SE of B	Beta	T	Sig
Constants	0.294	0.029		13.218	0.0000
learning environment					
Vs students attitude	0.105	0.012	0.427	10.712	0.0000

Hypothesis 1

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between learning environment and students' achievement in English language.

Table 6: Regression Summary on Learning Environment as it relates to Students' Achievement

(a)

Multiple R - 0.25492
R – squares (R^2) – 0.06499
Adjusted R squares – 0.06325
Standard error – 15.7904

$$F(1,538) = 37.392: P < 0.05$$
(b) ANOVA Results on Learning Environment as it relates to Students' Achievement

Variable	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Significance
Regression	9323.3590	1	9323.3590	37.39	0.0000
Residual	134144.2779	538	249.338		
Total	143467.6369	539			

From table 6(a), the multiple correlation was 0.25 with respect to students' achievement based on the effect of learning environment. The coefficient of relationship ($R^2 = 0.064$) contributes only 6.4% to the variation in achievement in English language. The F – ratio at the base of table 6(a) shows that the multiple correlation is significant. Hence, there is a significant relationship between learning environment and students' achievement in English language.

Hypothesis 2

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between school learning environment and students' attitude towards English language

Table 7: Regression Summary on learning Environment as it relates to Students' Attitude

(a)

Multiple R - 0.32014
 R – squares (R^2) – 0.08310
 Adjusted R squares – 0.06782
 Standard error – 6.14233

F (1,538) = 19.102: P<0.05

(b) ANOVA Results of learning Environment as it relates to Students' Attitude

Variable	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Significance
Constant	63.7632	1	63.7632		0.0000
Residual	114.3213	538	120.1734	17.364	0.0000
Total	178.0845	539			

The multiple correlation as shown in table 7(a) is 0.32 in respect of the relationship between learning environment and students' attitude. But the coefficient of relationship was ($R^2 = 0.083$) contribute only 8.3% to the variation in attitude development during the teaching of English language. All the same, the F – ratio at the base of table 7 (a) indicates that the multiple correlation is a significant case. So, there is a significant relationship between learning environment and students' attitude in English language.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In responding to this question, data on school learning environment were collected and analyzed using simple mean and standard deviation. The findings were presented in table 2. As shown on table 2, the result of learning environment as it relates to students' achievement in English language showed a grand mean of 2.73; which means that the respondents agree that learning environment affect students' achievement in English language. Also, in table 3, the correlation of learning environment and achievement gives a positive value (T = 22.06).

Based on the above, Ho₁, which states that there is no significant relationship between learning environment and students' achievement in English language, was rejected at 0.05 level of significance. This means that the learning environment has a relationship with students' achievement in English language. The findings of this study correspond with the findings of Obong, Okey, Aniah and Okabia (2010) that the physical outlook of the learning environment is very important in contributing to a healthy academic exercise. It also agrees with the findings of Aduwa – Ogiegbaen (2010) that there is the need to make provision for a conducive learning environment in Nigerian schools. This finding also corresponds with the findings of Teachernet (2008) that the surroundings in which students learn can greatly influence their academic performance and well-being.

Mean scores and standard deviations for all items on school-learning environment showed that students in Ebonyi State do not learn English language in a conducive environment. Most of the school compound showed total disdain for the aesthetics, unpainted buildings, leaking roofs, broken doors and windows. The respondents strongly disagreed that they have libraries, language laboratory, adequate chairs and desks. These findings corroborate the views of Okoza, Aluede & Akpaida (2012), Ayeni & Adelabu (2012) who observe that the school learning environment is positively correlated with students' academic achievement. Most Nigerian secondary schools lack infrastructural facilities such as toilet facilities, chairs, desks, tables etc. However, this study is contrary to that of Ona & Ugwu (2010) who observe that school learning environment and interest of the student had no significant effect on students' performance.

Research Question 2

How does learning environment relate to students' attitude towards English language?

Table 4 shows the mean results of learning environment as it relates to students' attitude towards the English language. From the table, a grand mean of 2.73 shows that respondents agree that the learning environment affects students' attitude towards English language. Also a correlation of learning environment and students' attitude on table 5 depicts a positive value.

Testing the null hypothesis H_{02} , which states that there is no significant relationship between learning environment and students' attitude towards English language in table 7, the correlation matrix shows the correlation coefficient between the two variables. Since the F ratio at the base of table 7 indicates that the multiple correlation was a significant case. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative accepted which means that there is a significant relationship between learning environment and students' attitude towards the English language.

The result of this study disagrees with Mclean (2011) who found no significant difference between the building condition, and school enrollment in the high and low performing schools. However, the findings of this study agrees with that of Hussain (2011) who found a positive correlation between classroom learning environment and attitude towards the learning of English language. Onyeachu (2008) corroborates this view as she observes that most secondary schools in Nigeria have dilapidated buildings, leaking roofs, inadequate chairs and tables for teachers' and students' use, creating room for poor achievement and negative attitude in the students.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this research work, this author recommends the following:

1. Government and stakeholders in the education industry should improve the school learning environment by rebuilding, repainting and renovating all the dilapidated school buildings to make them attractive and conducive for learning so that students' achievement in English language will improve. Social infrastructures needed for effective teaching and should also be provided.
2. Considering the central role of attitude in English language learning, both the government and parents should endeavour to create conducive learning environment in schools for students to develop a more positive attitude to the subject.

3. English language teachers should utilize innovative strategies enumerated in this work in teaching their students so as to develop positive attitude towards the subject in them.
4. Principals of schools should make the school learning environment more conducive, interesting, fascinating and learner friendly for a higher achievement in English language among the students, since there is a significant relationship between the learning environment and students achievement in English language.
5. Government should ensure that schools are located in noiseless areas of the town where students are not distracted by noise from trespassers and from the neighbourhood.

Educational Implication of the study

This study has shown the importance of providing suitable learning environment in secondary schools in Ebonyi state, Nigeria so that students will develop a positive attitude towards English language for better performance in the subject. This research work has shown that there is an urgent need to renovate the ancient and archaic outlook of the school buildings and classrooms, and pay more attention to the aesthetics. The findings of this study highlight the fact that a conducive learning environment plays a vital role in facilitating effectual language learning which promotes students motivational attitude that culminate into higher achievement in English language. Therefore, it is imperative that for students' to excel academically they need a favourable and conducive environment. Moreover, a review of literature has shown that no research work has been conducted on the relationship between school learning environment and SS2 students' achievement and attitude towards the English language in Ebonyi state, Nigeria. Therefore, this study will fill the gap..

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that learning environment is a problem embedded in the school system that has been inadvertently and cogently influencing students' achievement and attitude towards English language. In other words, they have been silently reinforcing the yearly mass failure in the subject at external exams. This needs to be addressed if the situation is going to improve. This researcher believes that if the school learning environment is improved, both variables of achievement and attitude towards the English language will definitely improve and the problem of mass failure in English language in Nigeria solved.

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