



Perceived Classroom Psychosocial Environment as Correlates of Students Interest in Senior Secondary School Geography in Orlu Education Zone 1 of Imo State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

This study investigated classroom psychosocial environment as perceived by Geography students of Orlu Education Zone 1 of Imo State and how it relates to their interest. Three research questions and a hypothesis guided the study. Correlational research design was adopted with a population of 5199 SS2 students. Proportionate stratified random technique was used to sample 358 students. Two instruments used for data collection were "Geography students' perception of classroom psychosocial environment indices (GSPCPEI)" and "Geography students interest scale (GSIS)". Mean and standard deviation; Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Regression analysis were used for data analysis. Results showed a moderate relationship between classroom psychosocial environment and students' interest in geography; based on the findings of the study, it is recommended for government to provide necessary equipments and conditions to create conducive learning environment.

Keywords: Geography, Psychosocial, Environment, Classroom, Perception and Interest.

Introduction

Man interacts with the environment he finds himself. This interaction of man within his environment is part of what Geography seeks to explain. According to KerkPatrick (2010), Geography is the science that address or discusses the spatial distributions concerning all phenomena on the earth surface; it describes the surface of the earth and its inhabitants. Geography studies the earth as the home of man; that is, how man interacts with one another and the physical things in his environment as they are located in space. Geography studies spatial forms and spatial interactions as well as the distribution of phenomena on the earth's surface (Ofomata, 2008). Ofomata is of the opinion that a well trained Geographer should have a liberal mind having knowledge on how man should interact with his environment and how to organise his society. A professionally trained geographer is versatile and can use his knowledge and skills in areas concerning the socio-economic sector, plays vital role in politics, urban, rural, or regional planning, estate management, aviation, survey, foreign policy, business, agriculture, consultancy services, commerce, general administration etc. Geographical education helps to maintain peace by promoting tolerance, understanding and friendship amongst all nations and religious groups (Ofomata, 2008). Akintade (2012), stated that, geography is one of the most essential school subjects in the secondary education curriculum. Despite these importances of Geography, some students find it difficult to cope with map work and

other geographical concepts and as such, dislike Geography. Many factors could have resulted in these failures. Some of the weaknesses noted in WAEC Chief Examiners report (2016-2018) include poor expressions, incomplete coverage of the syllables, poor map work, scanty presentation of points, inadequate preparation for the examination and poor mapping skills. The poor performance in these examinations could have resulted in low interest on the part of the student which will subsequently lead to poor achievement. Similarly, interactions in the classroom can also affect the students learning. There is interaction amongst scholars in the school. School is one of the most frequently studied environment in which children spend a substantial number of time (Fox, 2004). A good support from the teacher and a positive classroom environment could improve students' behaviour and this would likely imp their interest. The search for efficient and effective way of presenting the learning environment is a major concern to educationists. Environment could be defined as one's surroundings which could have a negative or positive influence on the person. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other world bodies concerned with the environment, view the concept of environment in its entirety as natural, artificial, cultural, ecological, economic, technological, political, social, and aesthetics (Ezeudu, 2003). According to Walberg (2001), school environment



refers to school moral or social-psychological surrounding that affects learning. The school environment is therefore all the psychological, physical, economical and social factors influencing the learner at school. A Classroom is a room in which a group of pupils or students are taught. It is a miniature community where member's interest might influence the behaviour of others (Miller & Cunningham, 2018). Interactions that take place in the classroom during teaching- learning process may likely affect the interest of the students of geography. The geography classroom environment involves the physical, psychological and psychosocial environment necessary for learning to occur during geography lessons. Early researchers recognised that someone's behaviour is determined by the role the personal characteristics and the environment play in his life (Bond, Butler, Thomas, Carlin, Glover, Bowes & Patton, 2007) and (Blum, 2005). It is therefore necessary to provide a good psychosocial environment for this might improve students' interest. The psychosocial classroom environment is a classroom concerned with the interpersonal social relationships in the classroom; that is, how students are encouraged to interact with or relate to others (classmates, teachers, other staff and instructional materials) and student's experience of the learning situations. Wilken, Moore, Goodenough, and Cox (2003) are of the view that it comprises the extent of teachers support, promoting students task related interactions, promotion of mutual respect and promoting performance goals. Psychosocial behaviour is interpreted as the extent students are conscious of their classroom environment and how they desire it to be. Poor interaction existing between teacher and student may lead to low interest while good interaction between the student and the teacher may lead to enhanced interest in Geography. Whatever interaction that is going on in the classroom could affect the way students perceive their classroom environment. Perception is viewed by Obi (2006) as an internal belief that influence personal actions which is learned through ones experience. Perception in this context is the way geography students see or interpret their Geography classroom influence their interest in the subject. It defined as one's enthusiasm in doing thir a very important factor that leads to the any goal, be it educational or otherwise. to be deeply involved and arouses the cur an individual. Adeleye (2011) conceive curiosity to do something. In the context

interest means the curiosity to study essential and relevant Geographical concepts and materials. Whatever one has interest in is what the person devotes the time, energy or resources on. It then means that when Geography students have interest in the subject, they will devote their time, energy and effort to master the relevant knowledge, attitude, values and skills necessary for them and they will also perceive their classroom psychosocial environment in a positive way and by implication enhance their performance in geography.

The state of Geography as a subject is of great concern to geographers, environmentalists, geography teachers, students and researchers. Effort has been made by geography teachers, environmentalists and researchers to improve interest and achievement in geographical education concepts in Nigeria yet, poor achievement in the subject persist (Henry, 2016). According to Igwebuike (2013), a number of studies have been carried out to identify how students perceive their classroom psychosocial environment. These studies cut across all disciplines both science and non-science and have been carried out over the previous quarter of a century (Fraser, 1986, 1998, 2002, 2007; Fraser and Wallberg, 1999; Khine & Fisher 2003; Fisher & Khine, 2006; Fraser, Aldridge & Alolphe, 2010). Majority of such studies were carried out in developed educational systems. In Nigerian situation, such studies are alarmingly few (Fraser, Okebukola a & Jegede 1992; Igwebuike, 1996; Igwebuike & Ilegar, 1994; Akale & Nkwonta, 1996; Peter, 2010). Muchera (2008) also stated that very little is reported about how Biology students in senior secondary school perceive their Biology classroom environment. Igwebuike (2013), reported on chemistry classroom. According to Igwebuike, there was a significant difference between teachers and students perception of actual classroom environment. The researchers therefore want to find out the relationship between students perception of the classroom psychosocial environment and how it affects their interest in Geography.

Researchers discovered that a correlation exist between an encouraging learning environment and students' involvement, classroom order and organization and teacher support. Most of these researches were carried out in developed educational systems and also in other disciplines. Therefore the result of these studies cannot be generalised to Nigeria due to the difference in the characteristics of these countries in the level of education, socio-economic

and socio-cultural settings which will contribute significantly to the strength of factors relating significantly to interest and achievement. Based on the problem of the study, the researchers determined the relationship which exists between students' perception of their Geography classroom psychosocial environment and their interest in senior secondary Geography. Specifically, this study intends to:

1. assess geography students' perception of their classroom psychosocial environment.
2. determine students mean interest in Geography;
3. establish the relationship between the classroom psychosocial environment of students and their interest in Geography;

In line with the purpose of study, the following research questions guided the study

1. How do students perceive their geography classroom psychosocial environment?
2. What is the mean (x) interest score of students in geography?
3. What is the relationship between the classroom psychosocial environment of students and their interest in Geography?

Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between the classroom psychosocial environment and students' interest in geography.

Methods

The design of this study is correlational survey research design. According to Ary (2010) correlational research design is a non- experimental research design that studies the direction and strength of relationship among variables. The research design is considered suitable for this study as it enables the present study to correlate students' perception scores of their classroom psychosocial environment to their interest in senior secondary school geography in Orlu education zone 1 of Imo state. This area was used because not much research work has been done in the area especially in the area of classroom psychosocial environment. The population size for the study consist all 5199 senior secondary two (SS2) Geography students in sixty-four (64) public secondary schools. The choice of SS2 class is anchored on the fact that it is not not an examination class; besides students in the class have been taught majority of the curriculum content of the senior secondary school Geography. The sample size

of this study is three hundred and fifty-eight (358) respondents. This sample was obtained using Raosoft online sample size calculator formula with 5% margin of error, 95% confident interval and 50% response distribution. Proportionate stratified sampling technique was used to select thirty-three (33) schools out of sixty-four (64) schools from the eight (8) local governments making up the area. Two instruments constructed by the researcher were used for the study. The two instruments are the Geography Students Perception of Classroom Psychosocial Environment Questionnaire (GSPCPSEQ) and Geography Students Interest Scale (GSIS). Specifically, the GSPCPEI contains 25 items while the GSIS contains 20 items each containing affirmative option strongly agree (SA)=4, Agree (A)=3, Disagree (D)=2 and Strongly Disagree (SD)=1. Cronbach alpha statistics was used to determine the reliability of the instruments. The reliability index of 0.72 and 0.70 were obtained for GSPCPEQ and GSIS respectively and thus, the instruments were adjudged reliable. Data were analyzed using the statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20). Data was analysed using Mean, standard deviation and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to answer the research questions and hypotheses was tested using the t-test analysis.

Results

Table1: Mean rating, standard deviation of the rating of classroom psychosocial environment (CPSE) and students' interest rating in Geography.

	Grand mean	SD
CPSE	2.15	0.87
Interest	1.80	0.73

Table one shows the mean ratings and standard deviations of items on psychosocial environment of geography classroom by students. In this cluster, twenty five questionnaire items were posed to students that offer geography to ascertain their perception of the classroom psychosocial environment, The overall mean of 2.15 which is below 2.50 benchmark has shown that students' disagreed on majority of the items on classroom psychosocial environment which shows that the classroom psychosocial environment of geography students are not stimulating but rather are undermined in the teaching and learning of Geography in Orlu Education Zone1 of Imo state. The standard deviations of the rating of the items have shown that

there was high dispersion of individual students' mean ratings when compared to their group mean.

The data in table one is the mean ratings and standard deviations of students' interest in geography. Twenty items on interest in geography were posed to students that offer geography subject to ascertain their interest in this cluster. Students' interest in geography is very low as the grand mean is 1.80 on a 4-point scale and standard deviation of 0.73. The high standard deviation indicated that there is high dispersion of individual mean ratings around group mean.

Table 2: Correlation analysis of the relationship between the classroom psychosocial environment of students and their interest.

Variable	N	r	r ²
CPEI	358	0.41	0.16

KEY: r = Correlation coefficient, r² = Coefficient of determination,

Result in Table 2 showed the correlation coefficient from the responses of the respondents on classroom psychosocial environment of students and their interest. The result showed that a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.41 with associated coefficient of determination (r²) of 0.16 was obtained between psychosocial environment of students and their interest. The correlation coefficient of 0.41 showed that there was moderate positive relationship between psychosocial environment of students and their interest (Cohen, 1988). Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (r²) of 0.16 indicates that 16% variation in students' interest is attributable to their classroom psychosocial environment. This is an indication 84% variation in students' interest is attributed to other factor other than psychosocial environment.

Table 3: Test of significance of the relationship between the classroom psychosocial environment of students and their interest in Geography

Model	Standardized T Coefficients Beta	Sig.	Remark
(Constant)		21.493	.000
Interest	0.41	10.208	.032 Significant

Classroom Psychosocial environment

In Table three, regression analysis was conducted to ascertain whether significant relationship exist between the classroom psychosocial environment of students and their interest in geography, $\beta = 0.41$; t

(358) = 10.208; sig. (p-value) 0.032. The associated or exact probability value of 0.032 when compared with 0.05 set as the level of significance for testing the hypothesis was found to be significant because 0.032 is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significance relationship between the classroom psychosocial environment of students and their interest was rejected. So, inference drawn was that, there is significance relationship between the classroom psychosocial environment of students and their interest.

Discussion

The finding of the study revealed low perception and unfavourable classroom psychosocial environment of Geography students in Orlu Educational Zone 1 of Imo State. This showed that there was low interaction amongst students, teachers and instructional materials. The finding of this study was in agreement with Banduras social learning theory (1977) which stated that learning occurs from constant interaction among significant factors. When there is a hitch in this constant or continuous interaction, or when it is not stimulating enough perception will be low. This study was in agreement with the findings of studies by Fisher and Fraser (1983), Fraser (1989); the implication of the findings as suggested by Fraser (1998) was that students' achievement might be enhanced by trying to change what is obtainable in the classroom environment in a way that is more congruent with that preferred by the students

The finding of the study also revealed low interest. The finding of this study was in consonance with that of Akinuoye, Akinuoye, Wan Shuib and Mokhtar (2015) who reported that recently students had lost interest in participatory learning of Geography since it was made an elective subject in senior secondary schools. This was in line with the assertions of Katz, Assor, Kanat-maymon and Bereby-meyer (2006) that generalised interest as a motivational resource on students' feedback on education. However, the finding of this study was in dissonance with the finding of Opoku (2019). According to Opoku, Ghanaian Geography students perceive Geography as interesting but difficult as compared to other social science disciplines and ranked it as either second or third choice when considering programs for higher education.

The finding of the study further revealed that there was positive significant relationship between classroom psychosocial environment and students' interest in



senior secondary Geography in Orlu education Zone 1 of Imo State. The finding of the study was in consonance with the finding of Ezike (2018) who discovered that classroom learning environment have positive relationship with students interest in academic activities. This result is tenable because of the role that interest play in different activities of life even in academics. Adeyemi and Adeyemi (2014) also noted that when interest is lost by the students, the failure rate increases adding social dimension to it.

Educational implication of the Study

The educational implication is that if the classroom psychosocial environment is not conducive, students' interest and achievement will continue to dwindle thereby performing poorly in senior secondary school Geography. Similarly, if the interest is not there, the students will not think about, discuss or learn about Geography

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