

School–Related Factors as Predictors of Senior Secondary School Students’ Literature in English Achievement in Ibadan Metropolis

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Abstract

This study examined school –related factors (school location, library resources, furniture and ventilation) as predictors of academic achievement of students in Literature-in-English in Ibadan Metropolis. The study employed a descriptive research design of survey type. The research instruments used were School–Related Factors Questionnaire (SRFQ) and Literature-in-English Achievement Test. The sample consisted of 400 students proportionately sampled from ten (10) randomly selected senior secondary schools in Ibadan. Data collected were analyzed using multiple regression analysis. Findings revealed that school location ($\beta = 4.087$; $t = 6.507$, $P > 0.05$), instructional materials ($\beta = 4.061$; $t = 5.710$, $P < 0.05$), classroom furniture (), and appropriate ventilation all had significant relative contribution to students achievement in Literature in English. The composite influence of the four factors was also significant. Based on the findings, recommendation were made that school owners should improve on facilities provided in the schools, Mobile libraries should also be provided in and around all the local government areas to grant students access to reading materials.

Keywords: School environment, variables, Predictors, Achievement, Literature-in-English

1. Introduction

Education is the greatest hope of a nation, particularly a developing nation such as Nigeria, where both the federal and state governments now realize that education is a necessity for the social, political and economic growth of the nation. Education is the process by which an individual acquires knowledge, skills, attitude and insight. It includes the development of cognitive (intellectual) affective (attitudes and values) and psychomotor (sensory motor) skills and abilities Heynemanns & Lexley, 1983).

The aims of education are both individual and cultural. It is designed to affirmatively assist the individual to develop their skills and abilities so as to fulfill their potentials and to lead productive and satisfying lives (Akinpelu, 1991). More often than not, all these learnings take place in the school especially in the case of formal education.

A school is an educational institution that is set up purposefully for teaching and learning. It has in it different classrooms and lecture theatres where students and learners are taught in arts, sciences, social and applied sciences, Fine Arts, Music, History, Languages, Literature and so on. Within the school, there are other apartments such as offices, libraries, laboratories and other conveniences for the same purpose of the smooth running of activities for which the school is established. The school could be publicly owned and administered by the government, voluntary organizations or private individuals. The school could be a primary, secondary or tertiary institution (Aremu, 2001).

The actualization of human potentials is one of the core aims of education. This is accomplished through the various disciplines or subjects which are taught in the schools. The various subjects which are taught in the school curriculum contribute in different ways to human and national development. The emphasis placed on certain subjects in preference to others may, to some extent, reflect their contributions to human and social development. The importance attached to the study of science at the expense of arts subjects is enormous. This may be the exclusive reason Ogunmola (2001) defends the importance of literature and some other art subjects. According to him, literature like sculpture, architecture, dancing, painting and music is an art which lives longer than life and employs its forms to enliven our lives.

Literature lacks a precise definition unlike some science subjects which are precise in their definitions. It is a term which covers a number of activities. In its most general sense, literature is taken to mean everything in print which has to do with knowledge or information that is written or which exists in printed form. Thus, there is a sense in which literature is used to refer to available written materials in different subject areas like History, Geography, Physics, Chemistry, Geology and so on. Ayanniyi (2009) defines literature as what a group of people or communities create for their own use and which other consume or enjoy. Thus, literature has a collective significance, becoming a property of the community in which it is produced (Moody, 1971). In this respect, Moody views literature as consisting of certain rather specialized forms, selection and collection of languages. This implies that language is the wheel or vehicle of expression and communication of literature. Literature is regarded as highly complex, elaborated statements about the world of the writer and his readers.

According to Ogunmola (2001) literature employs its forms to enliven our day-to-day activities. Nchikogwa (2003) says that literature is the field of human studies that man comes in contact with right from birth to death because it embodies the peoples culture, mores, religion, arts and norms. Encyclopedia American (2003) views literature as anything in print. It is the concept and existence of privileged forms of verbal discourse. This is to say, it uses patterned linguistic expression that go beyond the pragmatic function of communication which seem to have been a part of all organized human societies. Literature is expressive in nature, it has metaphysical powers, it is historical and ideological in its functioning. In all, it suffices to say that literature is not stable in its definitions. So, it is better described as a mode of discourse that distinguishes itself from “ordinary language”.

Ogunba (1996) is of the view that literature is imagination and this is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited but imagination encircles the world. Uwaifo (2002) says that literature is an art, the heart of which is as special as against ordinary use of language or word for whatever may be part of the nature of literature; deliberate manipulation for aesthetic effect is its essence. The essence is the core of history works. He also opined that language is the material of literature as stones is of sculpture, paint of picture and sound of music, thus, it seems best to consider as literature only works in which the aesthetic function is dominant. Akindolire (1999) also perceives literature as an expression of the feelings, emotions, passion cultures, events, views and experiences of the people of the world; while Olopoenia (2006) sees literature as an expression of the human quest for perfection. Iwuchukwu (1994) looks at literature as an imaginative work of art, which uses language, plot, characters, settings and so on to give us a picture of life. From this foregoing, it can be concluded that literature is the real essence of what life is about as it encompasses all human activities and experiences in all its genres such as poetry, drama and prose. Literature is offered in schools as Literature-in-English meaning literature of any clime written in the English Language.

Literature in English is an important subject among all academic subjects in the secondary school curriculum. It is one of the prominent art subjects. The failure rate in it at the school certificate level is a phenomenon that is giving students, parents, teachers and school authorities a lot of concern. This is so because students’ low performance in the subject in the senior school certificate examination has denied lots and lots of them admission into lucrative courses such as law, mass communication, theatre arts and a host of others in our tertiary institutions. According to JAMB brochure (2010) at least a credit pass is required before any candidate is eligible for admission to any of the aforementioned courses. However, the point of discourse now is how to reverse this anomaly of unsatisfactory performance in literature in English with emphasis on influence of school environment as it affects senior secondary school students in literature in English.

This continued poor performance of students is buttressed by the WAEC Senior School Certificate Results in literature in English for a period of nine years (2001-2009) presented in the table 1 below.

Table 1. Students' Performance in Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination in Literature-in-English between 2001 and 2009

Year	Total no Sat and %	Credits and Above						Total credit	Passes			Fail
		1	2	3	4	5	6	1-6	7	8	7-8	9
2001	161765	336	891	6835	7159	7650	22035	4490	19019	21091	40110	76749
		0.20	0.55	4.22	4.42	4.72	2.75	2.766	11.75	13.03	24.79	47.44
2002	201011	172	353	2883	1590	3537	18139	18139	1610	23751	39858	14304
		0.08	0.17	1.43	0.79	1.75	9.02	9.02	8.10	11.81	19.82	71.15
2003	210560	132	349	4133	262	5217	30663	30663	24967	34299	57196	113340
		0.06	0.16	1.96	1.07	2.47	14.56	14.56	11.72	15.43	27.16	53.82
2004	250805	93	218	2793	1677	3989	23588	23588	21765	32472	54237	163020
		0.03	0.08	1.11	0.66	1.59	9.40	9.40	8.67	12.94	21.62	64.99
2005	192764	65	148	1841	1200	2965	15704	15704	18477	28193	46670	130390
		0.03	0.07	0.95	0.62	1.53	8.14	8.14	9.58	14.62	24.21	67.64
2006	351582	126	228	2272	1636	4028	13625	13625	28566	48520	77086	252581
		0.03	0.06	0.64	0.46	1.14	3.87	3.87	8.12	13.80	21.92	71.84
2007	287626	84	172	1690	1196	3329	12792	12792	29896	1313	81209	187154
		0.02	0.05	0.58	0.41	1.15	4.44	6.69	10.39	17.84	28.23	65.06
2008	287178	296	287	2073	1536	4075	15467	23734	33362	550990	88452	169359
		0.10	0.09	0.72	0.53	1.41	5.38	8.26	11.61	19.81	30.80	58.97
2009	251015	146	339	3709	27611	7091	24238	38284	33104	64426	97530	115201
		0.05	0.13	1.47	.09	2.82	9.65	15.25	13.18	25.85	38.85	45.89

Source: Test Development Division WAEC Office, Ogba Lagos.

As indicated above in this table, the table shows the performance of students in literature-in-English for the past nine years (2001-2009). What occurs in columns 9 and 13 is enough to give us the true picture of students' performance in the subject under discussion. Column nine shows the summary of students' grades from grades 1-6, that is, those who passed with credit, while column 13 shows the number and percentage of students who had F9 throughout the federation. The percentage of 1-6 grades and that of F9 will be compared year by year.

In 2001, the percentage score of those who had 1-6 passes was 2.76% while that of F9 was 47.44%, in 2002, it was 9.2% as against 71.15%; in 2003, it was 11.14% as against 61.5%; in the year 2004, it was 9.40% as against 64.99% in the year 2005, it was 8.14% as against 67.64%; in 2006, it was 6.23% against 71.84%; in 2007, it was 6.69% against 65.06%; in year 2008, it was 8.26% against 58.97% and in the year 2009, it was 15.2% against 45.89%. Summarily, it is realized that throughout the nine years under review, the percentage of students who scored at least a credit pass is less than 16% while the failure rate rises between 45% and 71.5. The analysis so far indicates that students' performance in

Literature-in-English is far below expectation. This is a great challenge to literature students and teachers and even to all education stake holders to quickly address this bad phenomenon before it aggravates further.

The question that may come to one's mind about this annual dismal performance of students in this subject is: What are the factors responsible for this mass failure? Among the factors identified by Umukoro (2001) as responsible for poor performance of students are paucity of current literature texts, foreign setting that characterizes most literature texts, complex nature of poetry as a genre of literature, students' poor knowledge of English language as a medium of expression and improper method of teaching literature on the part of teachers.

Further to the above is the Chief Examiners' Report of WAEC on May/June Literature examination 2007. He opines that students do not perform well generally in the three genres of literature where they are tested but maintains that it is in the poetry aspect of the papers the candidates perform worst. Pritchard (2002) also testifies to the fact that students fail Literature-in-English due to poor teaching method and non-availability of suitable textbooks for the foreign students in whose environment English is a second language.

Apart from poor method of teaching Literature-in-English it is often noted that there are other sociological impediments which culminates in this poor performance in the subject among which are the home, the government and even the school environment. School environment is the place where the teacher does his teaching and where the learners (students) take their learning in Literature-in-English. The school is so essential in the process of learning so much so that its influence in the course of learning cannot be underestimated. A conducive school environment is capable of inducing learning whereas an inconducive school environment will affect learning negatively. The school environment is a force to be reckoned with when the success of students is being discussed. This perhaps explains the views of West (1976) that the achievement of success cannot be based on the intellect or the brilliance of the students alone. He went further to identify various dimensions of school environment as:

- i. School location
- ii. Teaching and learning resource variable
- iii. Library resources
- iv. Classroom Ventilation

To read, comprehend, remember and reproduce a text is a whole lot of exercise, which demands a serene atmosphere, a comfortable sitting position and in a conducive environment. All these are environmental factors which will create an enablement that would work favourably with the intelligence and brilliance of a student for him to perform optimally in his academic endeavour (Pritchard, 2002). The school location could be considered significant in that secondary schools spread in all locations both in urban and peri-urban areas in all the states of the federation (Ezewu, 1990).

The school location variable is an indication that the physical environmental features in the school are already in existence and it provides the students with the first hand life experiences. This may influence the secondary school leavers either to transit or otherwise to the tertiary institutions. The school ownership reveals the existence of public secondary schools that are established and administered by the federal or state governments and secondary schools established and administered by voluntary organizations, churches and private individuals. Majority of these schools are government owned and the location of schools is a force to be reckoned with. If the school is well sited, so much so that all impediments and hinderances are far from the area, the students will be able to read, understand and assimilate the texts assigned to them by the examining body Iwuchukwu (2003). Most school that were located very far from the cities and towns, have been enclosed by residential buildings as a result of urbanization.

Agreeing with other researchers, the South African Ministry of Education (SAME 2000) and Adelusi (2008) observe that poor school environment impact negatively on the quality of teaching with its implications on performance. The extensive research works cited above on school environment influence, prompted the interest in the investigation of the influence of school environment on students' achievement in literature.

In addition to these, teaching and learning research resources provisions in schools is a vital variable in this presentation. They are teaching aids and instructional materials. They are very important as they serve as aids to make teaching effective. The significance of these equipment motivate learners, sustain their interest and promote academic and students' and awareness of the topic taught. This cannot be underestimated. Adequate provision of teaching and learning resources in schools have been found to have positive effect on students' achievement (Fuller, 1996) especially in literature. These various studies conducted revealed that adequate supply and usage of these instructional materials always improve the students' performance and raise the quality of learning activities. Among such teaching and learning resources in secondary schools are; wallcharts, graphs, posters, textbooks, newspapers, magazines, journals, pictures, computer sets, radio, slip charts, films, CDS and DVDs, television sets and so on. Without an effective use of these materials to teach literature in English, teaching may not be effective nor will it yield good results.

In addressing the influence of school environment on the teaching and learning of literature-in-English, the library resource variable is very important. The library serves three basic functions;

- i. The collection and preservation of information
- ii. The organization of information
- iii. The dissemination of this information to readers.

The school library is saddled with the responsibilities mentioned above. The library is a serene and quite place in the school where students can read and borrow books for reading. The availability of a library within the school environment is a motivation for students to

intensify their reading culture. This will in no small measure enhance good and credible result at the end of their course and this is the reason Olopoenia (2006) submits that the library is the brain box of the school environment. She further reiterated that a school without a well equipped and functional library is like an aircraft without its brain box. This agrees with Obemeata (1995) who suggests that staffing situation should be improved in term of quantity and quality so that the academic performance of students could improve.

Apart from all these variables, one more important variable is that the classrooms in the school(s) should be well ventilated. A well ventilated classroom is a conducive place for learning. Literature being a school subject that requires intensive reading, the classrooms cannot but be well ventilated so that students will feel at ease during a class session and this is the reason Orenuga (2001) states that letting out fresh air and allowing fresh air into the classroom during a class session is of great health value and can make students concentrate on teaching/learning activities without hinderance. She opined that a poorly ventilated building or classroom could bring about infections due to air-tight situation.

The study of literature in schools despite its numerous values, has been plagued by persistent poor performance of students as well as decline in the enrollment of students in the subject. These are compounded by students' reluctance to read the recommended texts and their inability to cope with language of literature. Researchers had also indicated that the problems of Literature in English as a school subject is not only due to learner factors but also school factors. Previous studies have dealt with influence of the home and the society as predictors of senior secondary school students' achievement in Literature in English but attention has not been focused much on the school environment. This study therefore explored school -related factors (school location, instructional materials, classroom ventilation and library resources as predictors of senior secondary school achievement in Literature in English in Ibadan Metropolis

2. Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study;

1. Is there any significant relative influence of school location on students' achievement in literature?
2. Is there any significant relative influence of instructional materials on students' achievement in literature?
3. Is there any significant relative influence of library resources on students' achievement in literature?
4. Is there any significant relative influence of adequate and appropriate ventilation on students' achievement in literature?
5. Is there any composite influence of school environment variables on student achievement in Literature in English.

3. Significance of Study

The study would provide empirical information on the influence of school environment on senior secondary school students literature in English achievement in Ibadan North-East Local Government. It would also provide insight into the various dimensions of school environment that influence the teaching and learning of literature in English in secondary schools. The study would provide advice on where and how schools should be located and built. Not only this, it will state in categorical statements the number of students that should be in each class as recommended by the nation education policy. The quality of teachers to be recruited to teach Literature in English and different modes of teaching will be spelt out in the study.

4. Methodology

The study employed a descriptive research design. The target population for this study comprised SSS II students offering Literature- in- English in senior secondary schools in Ibadan, Nigeria. Simple random sampling techniques was adopted to select 15 senior secondary schools in Ibadan and the same method was used to select 400 students in intact classes. In all, a total of four hundred literature in English students participated in the study. Two instruments used for data collection were School –Related Factors Questionnaire (SRFQ) and Literature-in-English Achievement Test. The questionnaire has two sections A and B. section A deals with the demographic information of students such as: name, class, sex, age and school. Section B has 40 items that elicited information on school environment of students. Items 1-10 addressed school location, 11-20 is on instructional material used in the teaching of literature, 21-30 is on library resources available to students in the schools, 31-40 on ventilation and illumination of the classrooms in the various schools. The items were structured along 4-point Likert scale of strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine its reliability and a co-efficient of .79 was obtained. The Literature-in-English Achievement test. This is a standardized test adapted from Literature-in-English Paper 1 of West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination. It is made up of twenty-five multiple choice items that covered all the three genres of Literature-in-English i.e. prose, poetry and drama. The achievement test in Literature was revalidated using test re-test and a coefficient of .71 was obtained.

The questionnaire and the Achievement test were administered on the participants. The questionnaire was collected immediately after they were completed. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. Multiple Regression Analysis was used to establish relative and composite contributions of school –related factors (school location, instructional materials, library resources, ventilation and illumination) to senior secondary schools students' achievement in literature in English. Results were interpreted at 0.05 level of significance.

5. Results

Table 2. Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis showing Relative Influence of School location, instructional materials, library resources, and ventilation

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient		
	B	Std Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	158.090	234.369		.675	.500
i. School Location	-1.681	1.115	4.087	6.507	.113
ii. Instructional Materials	2.268	3.194	4.061	5.710	.478
iii. Library Resources	2.508E-02	2.617	5.001	3.010	.992
iv. Ventilation and illumination	4.797	3.973	0.64	1.207	.228

Dependent variable: Students' Achievement in Literature in English

Relative contribution of school location to students' achievement in literature in English?

Table 2 reveals that school location has significant influence on students' achievement in literature in English ($\beta = 4.087$; $t = 6.507$, $P > 0.05$).

Relative contribution of instructional materials to students' achievement in literature in English?

Table 4(v) shows that instructional materials has significant influence on the achievement of students in literature in English ($\beta = 4.061$; $t = 5.710$, $P < 0.05$).

Relative contribution of library resources to students' achievement in literature in English?

Table 4 reveals that library resource has significant influence on the achievement of students in literature in English ($\beta 5.001$; $t = 6.10$, $P < 0.05$).

Relative contribution of classroom ventilation on students' achievement in Literature-in-English?

Table 2 reveals that classroom ventilation has no significant relative contribution to achievement in Literature-in- English ($\beta = 0.64$; $t = 1.207$, $P > 0.05$)

Composite contribution of school environment to the independent variables (school

location, instructional materials, library resources, ventilation and illumination).

Table 3. Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis showing composite contribution of school environment to students' achievements in Literature- in- English in senior secondary schools in Ibadan North-East Local Government

Model	Sum of Squares	df.	Mean Square	F	Sig (P)
Regression	64677,523	8	8084.69		
Residual	825759.2	388	2128.245	3.799	1.000
Total	890436.7	396			

$R = 0.270$

$R^2 = 0,073$

Adjusted $R^2 = 0.054$

Table 2 shows that there is significant composite influence in relationship amongst all the independent variables (school location, teaching method, instructional materials, library resources, ventilation and illumination) and the dependent variable ($R= 0.270$). It also shows that the independent variables accounted for 5.4% of the total variance in the students' achievement in literature in English (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.054$). The joint influence is shown to be significant ($\beta = 5.388=3.799$; $P<0.05$).

6. Discussion

This study was aimed at determining the extent to which relative influence of school environment predicted on senior secondary school students' achievement in literature-in-English in Ibadan North-East Local Government area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings of this study revealed that the independent variables: school location, , instructional materials, library resources, ventilation and illumination have significant relative and composite contributions to students' achievement in Literature in English. The findings agree with those of Adeyemi (2008) and Darling-Hammond, (1994) who found in separate studies that these variables have significant relationship with academic achievement in English language and Mathematics among elementary school pupils. Adesipo (2007) corroborates Oni (1995) and Famade (2000) in their studies where they agreed that instructional materials are very essential and crucial to students' academic achievement in English Language in Lagos state, Nigeria. Adefarati (2002) submits that school libraries inculcate intellectual development and encourage the development of skills in reading among junior secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, findings from this study revealed that all the school-related variables in this

study are strongly linked to academic achievement in Literature-in-English. As such improvement in these variables could bring about improved performance of the students in the subject

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are proffered. In siting schools, conducive standard classroom blocks should be built in less noisy environments. Fences should be built round the schools to curtail encroachment into the school premises and for security reasons. Teaching service commission should ensure that certified graduate teachers are recruited to teach literature in English. Teachers should be innovative in the use of teaching and learning materials for effective learning outcomes. The Ministry of Education in Oyo State should endeavour to provide library facilities in each public secondary schools and get them equipped with seasoned and current reading materials that students can make reference to from time to time. Mobile libraries should be reactivated and taken round all the local government areas to grant students access to reading materials.

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