

**LEARNING RESOURCES AVAILABILITY AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
IN SOCIAL STUDIES IN CALABAR MUNICIPAL
COUNCIL, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA: IMPLICATION
FOR GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION**

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Abstract

The study examined learning resources availability and students' academic performance in Social Studies in Calabar Municipal Council Area, Cross River State. To achieve the purpose of this study, two null hypotheses were formulated. Ex-post-facto research design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised all Upper Basic III students from government owned schools in the study area. While purposive sampling technique was used in selecting 200 students offering Social Studies for the study. A 20-item 'Learning Resources Availability Questionnaire (LRAQ) and a 20-item Social Studies Performance Test (SSPT)' were used for data collection. Data analysis technique adopted was the independent t-test. The result showed that, availability of visual aids and adequacy of library facilities significantly influenced students' academic performance in Social Studies in the study area. Based on the findings, it was recommended amongst others that provision of adequate library facilities should be made available by government and other relevant stakeholders in our schools as this will boost students' mental development as well as academic performance in Social Studies.

Keywords: Availability of visual aids, Adequacy of library facilities, Social Studies, Academic performance, Mental development

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

Learning resources occupy an integral part in the Nigerian educational system. It serves as an important tool for effective teaching and learning. However, the availability, adequacy, and accessibility of learning resources have continued to generate public concern, especially at the higher level of education, due to their importance in promoting student learning and academic achievement (Zhang et al., 2023; Ubandoma et al., 2022; Adedimeji, 2021; Unimna et al., 2013). Similarly, Social Studies as of one of the subjects taught at the Upper Basic level seeks to make learners capable of understanding the complexities of human interrelations; applying knowledge gained to their environments, expressing oneself by use of language, art

and crafts in a manner that promotes harmony; among others (Edinyang et al., 2020). Social Studies is expected to be amply rich in content and objectives with appropriate methods for its teaching and learning. These should be reflected in the experience derived by Social Studies learners when they use instructional materials (Adams et al., 2024; Egan & Effiom, 2022; Ogbaji, 2017). The Nigerian National Policy on Education (2014) posited that Social Studies provides the vehicle for the pursuit and acquisition of individual and national goals, that is, helping the individual to acquire that knowledge, skill, insight and values that will enable him or her to function with accuracy and happiness as a member of the society and to contribute his or her own quota to the development of his immediate community, state and Nigeria.

In Nigeria, Social Studies is one of the core subjects studied at the Junior Secondary School (JSS) (Upper Basic Level). Its importance stems from the fact that its study is premised on the desire to inculcate the spirit of patriotism, democratic values and moral rectitude in the learners. Social Studies serves as an important vehicle for developing and cultivating proper attitudes toward fellow citizens, the immediate environment of the learners, the Nigerian nation and the world generally. It teaches the principles of right human relationships, harmonious social living, representative and responsible citizenship, an appreciation of the multi-cultural nature of Nigeria and knowledge and skill in the intelligent release of the physical and human resources of Nigeria. Undoubtedly, the teaching of the subject is therefore expected to have a unifying and stabilizing force on Nigerian unity and stabilization as a people (Adams et al., 2024; Egan & Effiom, 2022; Ubandoma et al., 2022).

In recent years, notwithstanding the integral role Social Studies plays towards the attainment of the prospect and progress of the nation, a worrisome decline in students' performance has been observed in students' result especially from terminal examinations. Research has indicted parents, teachers and even poor funding by government as some key factors responsible for the poor trend (Nwafor et al., 2024, Achor & Ejigbo in Agwu & Aja-Okorie, 2021; Ekpoto & Bassey, 2018).

Unarguably, the provision of a conducive school environment (equipped with basic learning resources) that supports teaching and learning is key in the attainment of acceptable school performance (Akem, 2008; Ekpoto et al. 2021). This is because the environment where the child learns contributes to his overall academic performance. Studies have established that the physical, social and psychological environments provide the mental readiness of the learner for effective learning to take place (Ekpang et al. 2023; Akpama & Effiom, 2022; Ekpoto et al. 2021). Learning resources cover all the physical, social and psychological factors that impact on the overall life of students in a school (Agwu & Aja-Okorie, 2021; Ofoegbu in Edinyang & Effiom, 2017; Arul-Laurence, 2012). These include buildings, library, visual instructional tools, sport facilities, teachers, peers, etc. Learning resources do not only encompass those materials or aids with which the child learns (physically), but also include the people with whom the child interacts with (socially). Studies averred that any school where these components, for example availability of the right functional and usable infrastructures, availability of the right quality and quantity of training materials and workforce, standard class and good administration is in place, is bound to produce students with high academic performance and vice versa (Nwafor et al., 2024; Nwafor et al. 2023; Okeke et al. 2020; Omori & Akpama, 2022)..

Previous research has earmarked some learning resources like Aerial Photographs, Google Earth and Maps; charts, graphs, school personnel, environment, school ownership, school type and school structure as some of the variables that could relate with or influence students' academic performance (Atubi, 2021; Olokooba, 2020; Aja-Okorie et al., 2019; Ekpoto & Bassey, 2018; Amalia & Hapsari, 2018; Aernyi & Odeh, 2017; Ofoegbu in Edinyang & Effiom, 2017). This present study considered learning resources such as availability of visual aids, and adequacy of library facilities. This is aimed at establishing how each of these variables influence students' academic performance in Social Studies in the study area. Arising from the lapses in the school system evidently manifested in the worrisome decline in students' academic performance, this study seeks to determine the state of learning resources availability and students' academic performance in Social Studies in Calabar Municipal Council, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

Social Studies' result at the junior secondary school level has not been encouraging at the Basic Education Certificate Examinations (BECE). In recent years students' academic performance in Social Studies has aroused the concern of relevant stakeholders including, but not limited to teachers and researchers. Quite often, blames are tied to either teachers or parents for the poor academic performance of students. In a bid to addressing the worrisome decline in students' academic performance in public schools in Cross River State, the government of Cross River State has tried employed more teachers into the schools and renovated most of the schools but there seems to be no positive result. Accordingly, if government is doing her maximum best within the reach of the available resources to ensure good students' academic performance to no avail, something needs to be done in looking critically at those variables that directly impacts on instructional delivery and teaching-learning process generally; given the invaluable role of a conducive environment in the teaching-learning process.

Earlier research has investigated learning resources such as Aerial Photographs, Google Earth and Maps; charts, graphs, school personnel, environment, etc., this study sought to investigate learning resources availability and students' academic performance in Social Studies in Calabar Municipal Council of Cross River State, Nigeria. The question this study sought to answer is how does learning resources availability in terms of availability of visual aids and adequacy of library facilities influence students' academic performance in Social Studies in Calabar Municipal Council of Cross River State, Nigeria?

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to examine learning resources availability and students' academic performance in Social Studies in Calabar Municipal Council, Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought at determine:

- 1) The influence of availability of visual aids on students' academic performance in Social Studies.
- 2) The influence of adequacy of library facilities on student academic achievement in Social Studies.

Research questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- 1) How does availability of visual aids influence students' academic performance in Social Studies?
- 2) To what extent does adequacy of library facilities influence students' academic performance in Social Studies?

Research hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- 1) Availability of visual aids does not significantly influence students' academic performance in Social Studies.
- 2) There is no significant influence of adequacy of library facilities on students' academic performance in Social Studies.

METHODS

The research design adopted in this study was ex-post-facto design. Isangedighi, Joshua, Asim and Ekuri (2004), asserted that ex-post facto research design is a systematic empirical inquiry in which the researchers do not have direct control of independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred. The study area is Calabar Municipal Council Area. Calabar Municipal Council Area has 16 government owned secondary schools. These schools have a population of 2982 Upper Basic III, made up of 1711 girls and 1271 boys (Cross River State Universal Basic Education Board, 2023). From this population, a total of 200 Upper Basic III students were purposively sampled from eight schools for the study. A 20-item 'Learning Resources Availability Questionnaire (LRAQ) and a 20-item Social Studies Performance Test (SSPT)' were used for data collection. Data analysis technique adopted was the independent t-test.

The two null hypotheses formulated for this study were tested at .05 level of significance using the independent t-test. The essence was to establish whether to accept or reject the hypotheses.

RESULTS

Hypothesis one

Availability of visual aids does not significantly influence students' academic performance in Social Studies. The independent variable is availability of visual aids while the dependent variable is students' academic performance in Social Studies. The statistical tool adopted in testing this hypothesis was the independent t-test. The result of the analysis is shown in Table 1.

The result of the analysis in Table 1 indicates that the calculated t-value of 2.15 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.97 at .05 levels of significance with 198 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis that stated that, availability of visual aids has no significant influence on students' academic performance in Social Studies was rejected; while the alternate hypothesis which states that availability of visual aids has significant influence on students' academic performance in Social Studies was upheld. This implies that availability of visual aids significantly influences students' students' academic performance in Social Studies.

Table 1: Shows independent t-test analysis for the influence of availability of visual aids on the students' academic performance in Social Studies (N = 200)

Availability of visual aids	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-value	p-level
Available	100	20.21	1.25	2.15*	.000
Not available	100	20.10	1.16		

* Significant at .05 level, critical t = 1.97, df = 198

Hypothesis two:

There is no significant influence of adequacy of library facilities on students' academic performance in Social Studies. The independent variable is adequacy of library facilities while the dependent variable is students' academic performance in Social Studies. The statistical tool applied in testing this hypothesis was the independent t-test. The result of the analysis is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Shows independent t-test analysis for the influence of adequacy of library facilities on students' academic performance in Social Studies (N = 200)

Adequacy of library facilities	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-value	p-level
Adequate	100	20.22	1.53	3.12*	.000
Not adequate	100	20.17	1.31		

* Significant at .05 level, critical t = 1.97, df = 198

The result of the analysis presented in Table 2 shows that the calculated t-value of 3.12 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.97 at .05 levels of significance with 198 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis that stated that, there is no significant influence of adequacy of library facilities on students' academic performance in Social Studies was rejected. While the alternate hypothesis which states that there is a significant influence of adequacy of library facilities on students' academic performance in Social Studies, was retained. This means that adequacy of library facilities have a significant influence on students' academic performance in Social Studies.

Summary of findings

The following findings were gathered from the analysis of data:

1. Availability of visual aids has significant influence on students' academic performance in Social Studies
2. Adequacy of library facilities have significant influence on students' academic performance in Social Studies

Discussion

The findings on hypothesis one revealed that availability of visual aids has a significant influence on students' academic performance in Social Studies. This result agrees with Moronfolo in Ogbaji (2017) whose study revealed that the availability of instructional resources significantly affects students' academic achievement in 10 different subject of study. The result also agrees with Amalia and Hapsari (2018) who reported that visual learning media enhanced students' learning of Social Studies.

The result of the analysis of hypothesis two revealed that, adequacy of library facilities have significant influence on students' academic performance in Social Studies. This finding agrees with Aernyi and Odeh (2017) who remarked that library facilities significantly influenced students' academic achievement. The finding also aligns with Carvalho e Rodrigues & Mandrekar, (2020) whose study reported that a significant and remarkable relationship existed between the library usage and students' academic performance.

Implication for Geography Education

This study has significant implications for Geography Education curriculum planners and developers in Nigeria, particularly in Cross River State. The findings bring to fore the urgent need for regular conferences, seminars, training and workshops to be organized for government officials, teachers, and school administrators to raise awareness about the critical role of a learning resources in enhancing students' academic performance. Moreover, the study's outcomes can inform Geography educators in universities, teachers' training colleges, and colleges of education as they develop curriculum for Geography teachers, ensuring that their programmes pay great attention to the indispensable use of modern learning resources in teaching and learning. In addition, this research can empower Geography teachers to recognize the value of encouraging their students to regularly make use of library facilities, which can foster a more holistic learning experience and improve student outcomes. Adopting these recommendations, will help educators to create a supportive and an engaging teaching/learning environment that promotes academic excellence and prepares students for success in an increasingly complex, dynamic and interconnected world.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusion was made.

1. Availability of visual aids has significant influence on students' academic performance in Social Studies
2. Adequacy of library facilities has significant influence on students' academic performance in Social Studies

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made from the findings:

1. That government should provide more visual aids for the teaching of Social Studies and other subjects in our schools.
2. That provision of adequate library facilities should be made available by government and other relevant stakeholders in our schools as this will boost students' mental development as well as academic performance in Social Studies.

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