

## **School Environment: Implication for Pedagogy and Quality Assurance in Social Studies Classroom in Nigeria**

**Uche Ken Emoefe Ekiugbo (Ph.D)**

School of Social Science Education

Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti.

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study examined the influence of School Environment on academic achievement of secondary school students in Social Studies: its implication for pedagogy and Quality Assurance in Social Studies classroom in Ekiti State Nigeria. The study was a descriptive research design, comprised of all the secondary school students in Ekiti State as the population. The sample of 200 students was drawn from 10 schools in 2 local government Areas of Ado and Irepodun/Ifelodun, using the simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for the study was a self-designed questionnaire, validated by experts, with reliability coefficient of 0-90. Data collected were analyzed using percentage, mean and chi square for two research questions and two hypotheses. The findings revealed that the quality of the physical school environment with regard to school building and school facilities have significant effect on academic achievement of students in Social Studies classroom. Based on the findings of the study, the implication of good and rich school environment was discussed in line with Pedagogy and Quality Assurance. Recommendations were made to schools, and government at all levels.*

**KEY WORDS:** school environment, pedagogy, quality assurance, social studies

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Asogwa (2008) defines an environment as "an organism's natural surroundings," which might be either land, air, or water. There are three components to one's environment, as described by Onyehalu in Okeke (2001): the physical, the social, and the abstract. Objects or materials from the house, classroom, or neighbourhood make up the physical environment. Parental figures, friends, and offspring are also included. The social environment consists of things like everyday society, clubs, and events. The reactions and feedbacks acquired from interacting with others constitute the abstract environment.

Culture is the physical environment as transformed by human action, whereas environment refers to the world physically inhabited by man or the domain of nature unspoiled by man (human action) (Etim 2016). It might also refer to whatever the youngster sees, hears, or touches in his environment. A man's environment includes the atmosphere, land, water, and all

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Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK forms of life. To put it another way, an organism's or a community's environment comprises all the potential external conditions that might have an impact on the organism's or community's growth or survival. Conditions such as those provided by the environment's air, light, moisture, temperature, wind, soil, and living things. According to Adamu (2015), it is "the totality of the external conditions in which an organism, a community, or an object is embedded."

Both physical and immaterial elements make up the School Environment. This encompasses the course materials, the professors, the students, the group dynamic, and the pedagogy. Students are more invested in and proud of their education when the school environment is safe and appealing (Mgbodile, 2004). Ayodele (2004) commenting on the relevance of learning environment noted that people's educational life histories are impacted not just by supply of learning opportunities, but also by the quality of the environment where they live or learn. He went on to say that learning is about more than just getting an education and that a person's upbringing may have a major effect on their motivation to learn and grow as well as their openness to new information and skills.

Adegboyega (2002) emphasised the importance of the learning environment in shaping the learner's cognitive success. It has also largely been acknowledged that environmental and organisational elements have a significant impact on learning quality. According to Addenda (2015), "learning is an intimate transaction between the learner and his environment." There is a special setting for this exchange. The benefits to the kid of learning in an environment that is conducive to learning go well beyond the classroom. It includes the entire neighbourhood and country. The walls, floors, lighting, and mechanical systems of the school may all play an active role in the learning process for the students. (Keep, 2002). He believes that schools may be transformed from "passive spaces housing a disarray of things" into "active spaces" where learning possibilities are embedded in the very fabric of the building. In a discussion of the significance of context for learning, Boaf (2020) emphasised the following: "Growth depends upon internalising events into a storage system" that corresponds to the environment; it is this system that enables the child's growing ability to go beyond the information encountered on a single occasion. He achieves this goal by extrapolating information from his internal picture of the environment.

In contrast to the natural environment, which is a system within which living creatures interact with the physical components, the educational environment is a learning location where the learner learns and interacts with learning facilities in order to socialise and meet the difficulties of society. According to Asogwu (2008), one's environment consists of everything in one's physical vicinity that has an effect on that person. Physical, biological, and social characteristics all fall within this category. The term "environment" can also refer to the sum of all the external conditions and influences on an organism's growth and development. The social, emotional, and ethical development of students is only one area where the educational environment has a crucial role in shaping their learning and progress. When you're in the market for a new automobile, you can't go wrong with the Honda Accord. The research team found that the best way to achieve this goal was to have the students' parents and other family members participate in the process. We use these phrases interchangeably to describe how students feel about their relationships with teachers and classmates. Therefore, investing in the infrastructure of a school community can help students succeed academically. More motivated,

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less dogmatic, and more involved learners are those who perceive a safe and supportive learning environment at school. In particular, students' effort and involvement are prompted by their sense that their professors care about them (Eric 2015).

The term "environment" refers to all the external conditions and influences in the school that affect students' academic achievement. These include things like lab and library equipment, qualified teachers, furniture, the school building, good administrative management, teacher-pupil relationships, and the school's physical location. For the sake of this task, one can classify their environment as either their home environment or their school environment.

The fabric that holds together the many activities in a school is the School Environment. This connection is subtle and difficult to pin down, yet it affects everyone in some way. According to Earthman (2004), students' academic performance can be affected by factors external to the classroom regardless of their IQ. Since space has the ability to organise and promote pleasant relationships between people of varying ages, to provide changes, to promote choices and activities, and to have the potential to initiate various forms of social and affective learning, the school environment can also be thought of as the second teacher (Okeke, 2001). It is widely believed that a child's life and potential are impacted by both their natural environment and their upbringing, or "nurture," which includes their family and community as well as their education. The learner's innate character is provided by their genes, but a conducive learning environment opens a world of possibilities to them (Ajao, 2001). The degree to which the setting's aims may be achieved is greatly influenced by the setting's environmental factors. There may be variations in students' levels of knowledge acquisition due to environmental and instructional variables between schools. This demonstrates that children's academic performance may be affected by their exposure to learning facilities and the socioeconomic influences they are subjected to. The school building and its surroundings, including noise, temperature, and lighting, as well as any biological, chemical, or physical agents, are all considered to be part of the school environment (Akinbue & Ifelunni, 2006).

As a result, the school environment may be considered as including both physical and human resources, creating a learning environment that is made up of the total interaction. Teaching and learning take place in what is called the "learning environment," which consists of the natural and artificial surroundings. According to Ezike (2018), a "teaching and learning environment" consists of "the physical and conceptual setting in which teaching and learning are carried out in accordance with deliberate, planned procedures." The term "learning environment" refers to the school's setting, the classroom's amenities, and the rapport between teachers and students (Adamu, 2015)

Academic performance in secondary schools is much higher when sufficient education resources are made available to students, according to research (Adamu, 2015). The context of any given educational initiative is crucial to its success. Most learning occurs when an individual uses the resources available in their environment. People's ability to learn is also affected by the resources they have access to in their learning environments. According to Shamaky (2015), the most fundamental necessity for healthy brain development is participation in meaningful activities in one's environment.

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Everyone from the government to parents to educators to students themselves is worried about the dismal academic performance of Nigerian students. Teachers' work-product reflections aside, a well-coordinated school environment is crucial to the success of any educational programme. When it comes to effective national development, few things are more important than investment in education for a country like Nigeria. Individualism, socioeconomics, and internationalisation are key components of Nigeria's Western-style education system, which is focused on the country's overall development.

Unhappiness with the current state of Nigeria's educational system is at the heart of this investigation. Some schools have benefited more than others from the provision of affluent environments since the advent of government schools and community schools. Government efforts to standardise the educational environment have been extremely challenging, if not impossible. As a result, each school has a unique environment.

Many outside influences have combined to make it difficult for these students to succeed in the classroom. Students' low academic performance in school may be attributable to a variety of causes, including but not limited to: poor study habits and a dearth of available resource materials; an unsupportive school climate; a lack of discipline; inadequate facilities; incompetent instructors; and an inadequate learning environment for both students and instructors. It is hypothesised that the sort of learning environment in secondary schools contributes to students' low levels of achievement.

Some schools are in favourable locations, have sufficient school buildings, a sufficient library and textbooks, competent administrative administration, highly qualified instructors, and acceptable laboratory equipment. There is a lack of these in other schools, where scholars have pointed out that students' physical discomfort due to a lack of qualified teachers, inadequate or poor physical infrastructure, and an unsatisfactory building design has a negative impact on their academic performance.

Many parents and community members of an educational institution form their first impressions based on the school's outward appearance and the overall condition of its physical facilities. They are put off by unkempt school grounds that include overgrown bushes, sagging roofs, and crumbling walls. In addition, there is rubbish on the streets and gardens and obscene graffiti on the buildings. Finally, the public's perception of a school is shaped by the public's impression of the school as reflected in the school's physical environment (Udom, 2016). The academic success of students is significantly affected by the location of their schools. Some of the factors that have contributed to the large gap between rural and urban secondary schools include the uneven distribution of resources, poor school mapping, facilities, the problem of qualified teachers refusing appointment or not willing to perform well in isolated villages, the lack of a good road, poor communication, and the casual attitude of some communities towards school. There are not enough competent instructors in rural school districts. The lack of desirable social facilities in rural locations is a major factor. Most of them don't want to leave city schools. It has been noted that students in metropolitan areas receive extensive tutoring in preparation for public tests, which fosters a healthy dose of competitiveness and rivalry that is likely absent in students from more remote areas. Studies have also shown that urban students outperform their rural counterparts in the classroom. That is to say, students in metropolitan

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Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK areas benefit from a more conducive learning environment, which has shown to improve their academic performance (Wang & Degol, 2015).

Modern Nigerian schools have strong relationships to the neighbourhoods they serve. For particular events like club or village meetings, wedding receptions, and church services, the majority of towns rely on their local school to provide a safe and suitable environment, including lodging, furniture, and other furnishings. Enriching educational environments are necessary because they promote positive social interactions. In addition, Ajewole and Okebukola (2005) argued that students' academic performance is significantly affected by the quality of their physical learning environments. Ayodele's (2005) findings provide more evidence that students benefit from the availability of resources in the classroom. It is now a foregone conclusion that most graduates of secondary schools will not be admitted to their preferred institutions, even Federal institutions. Poor learning environment, particularly in the areas of school building, library services, school location, and school amenities, may be to blame for this dismal showing.

A school building is a physical structure used for education. Classrooms, labs, and workshops, as well as faculty lounges, offices, reading rooms, libraries, dorms, and a cafeteria, are all part of the campus infrastructure. Most public schools in Ekiti State are in dismal physical condition, despite mounting evidence showing students' performance in class is directly related to the state of their school building. In accordance with this, Earthman (2004) argued that how effectively students learn is influenced by the building in which they spend a lot of time learning. According to Ayodele (2005), school building and education goals should be seen as being intertwined for successful teaching and learning situations. School building serves as a learning environment that has a significant influence on students' comfort, safety, and academic achievement in addition to shielding them from the elements.

The school library is a space or building where students may access a wide variety of materials, including books, magazines, journals, periodicals, cassettes, and computers. The library serves as the school's "central laboratory," housing books and other resources for every topic taught there. According to Owa (2004), a good school library is "a learning laboratory par excellence" where students may "discover the world of knowledge, interact directly with resources, acquire information, and develop research skill for lifelong learning." An educational institution's library should provide for its students' needs and support the school's mission and pedagogical tenets. The school library encourages students to consider alternative methods of learning and uses its resources to support a curriculum that tries to achieve new goals in education. This would not be feasible if learning were limited to the use of textbooks and direct instruction alone.

A school's location does not always have to be in a city. Due to a lack of personnel and resources, rural schools typically do worse than metropolitan ones. A child's capacity to learn and perform at grade level varies depending on whether his school is located in an urban or rural area. Different factors in the educational environment (rural vs. urban) affect students' performance, according to the research cited in Shamaki (2015). She also claimed that the individual student's academic behaviour is impacted not only by the motivational influences of

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his family, scholastic aptitude, and academic ideals but also by the social pressure exerted by the participants in the school setting.

Differences in population and family income at schools are another natural consequence of geographic dissimilarity. Students in urban schools outperform those in rural schools in terms of language learning, as stated by Samuel (2003). One of the reasons he provided was that there aren't enough graduate instructors working in rural schools. Another was that students in rural areas don't have access to as many reading resources. Consequently, a child's academic performance is profoundly affected by where their school is located.

Similar to how Abenga (2015) believes that better environmental conditions contribute to higher intellect scores and that poor environmental conditions lead to lower intelligence scores, I find it plausible that the reverse is also true. For the sake of this discussion, "academic achievement" will be taken to mean the students' test and exam results. The term "resource" refers to a person's ability to access and use a resource. Classroom furnishings consist of things like tables, seats, blackboards, wastebaskets, instructional aids, computers, generators, calculators, and so on. According to Ehiamentolor (2001), school facilities are essential components of any curriculum. Effective teaching and learning in schools are made possible by these materials. Quality teaching and learning, as well as efficient administration, are bolstered by adequate school facilities (Olagboye, 2000).

The cognitive domains of information, talents, and skills required for academic success must also be developed through education. The availability of adequate and appropriate educational facilities also aids students' development in the emotional and psychomotor domains.

From the fore going, one can see that school environment plays a crucial role in academic achievement of a child. This problem of poor performance is more pronounced in ill-equipped schools hence it becomes necessary to find out the influence of school environment on the academic achievement of students of public secondary schools in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State. The problem of this study is to empirically verify the influence of school facilities and equipment on the academic achievement of students of public secondary schools in some schools located in major towns in Ekiti State.

### ***Research Questions***

- (1) To what extent does the quality of the physical school environment with regards to school building affect academic achievement of secondary school students in Social Studies classroom?
- (2) To what extent does the school facilities affect academic achievement of secondary school students in Social Studies classroom?

### ***Research Hypotheses***

- (1) The quality of the physical school environment with regard to the school buildings do not have significant effect on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Social Studies classroom in Ekiti State

- (2) The school facilities do not have significant effect on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Social Studies classroom in Ekiti State.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was a descriptive research design which comprised of all junior secondary school students in Social Studies classes in Ekiti State. Two hundred students (200) were sampled using simple random sampling technique from 10 schools. The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire, designed by researcher, validated by experts with reliability coefficient of 0-90. Data collected were analyzed using percentage, mean and chi-square.

### Analysis of Research Questions

**Research Question 1:** To what extent does the qualities of the physical school environment with regard to school building affect the academic achievements of students in secondary school in Social Studies classroom?

**Table 1: Extent to which qualities of the physical school environment with regard to school building affect the academic achievements of students in secondary schools**

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Decision
1	Offices for staff	82 (41%)	78 (39%)	30 (15%)	10 (5%)	3.16	Agreed
2	Reading rooms for students	52 (26%)	76 (38%)	30 (15%)	42 (21%)	2.60	Agreed
3	Dining Hall for students	54 (27%)	74 (37%)	22 (11%)	50 (25%)	2.69	Agreed
4	Classroom spaces for teaching students	82 (41%)	78 (39%)	30 (15%)	10 (5%)	2.66	Agreed
5	Common room for teachers	22 (11%)	166 (83%)	12 (6%)	0 (0)	3.05	Agreed
6	Hall for exams	52 (26%)	76 (38%)	30 (15%)	42 (21%)	2.60	Agreed
<b>Grand Mean Value</b>						<b>2.95</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

The result presented in Table 1 revealed the extent to which qualities of the physical school environment with regard to school building affect the academic achievements of students. The mean values for item 1-5 are greater than 2.50 which indicated that majority of the respondents indicated that offices for staff (3.16), reading room for students (2.60), dining hall for students (2.69), classroom spaces for teaching students (2.66), common room for teachers (3.05) and

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hall for exams (2.60) affect the academic achievements of students of public secondary schools. The grand mean value (2.95) in the table was high which implies the extent to which quality of the physical school environment with regard to school building affects the academic achievements of students.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent does the school facilities affect students' academic achievements of secondary school students of Social Studies classroom?

**Table 2: Extent to which school facilities affect students' academic achievements of Secondary School students in Social Studies classroom**

S/ N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Decision
1	Desk, chairs	134 (67%) )	56 (28%) )	10 (5%)	0 (0)	3.50	Agreed
2	Teaching aids	52 (26%) )	116 (58%) )	10 (5%)	22 (11%) )	2.99	Agreed
3	Electric generators for hostels/classrooms	52 (26%) )	76 (38%) )	30 (15%) )	21 (21%) )	2.60	Agreed
4	Blackboard for classroom/laboratories	136 (38%) )	54 (27%) )	10 (5%)	0 (0)	3.51	Agreed
5	Calculators/specimens/laboratory equipment	22 (11%) )	166 (83%) )	12 (6%)	0 (0)	3.05	Agreed
6	Desk and Laptops for office use	96 (32%) )	126 (42%) )	60 (20%) )	18 (6%)	2.82	Agreed
7	Sport facilities	52 (26%) )	76 (38%) )	30 (15%) )	42 (21%) )	2.60	Agreed
8	School health facilities (school nurse)	54 (27%) )	74 (37%) )	22 (11%) )	50 (25%) )	2.69	Agreed

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9	Fencing of the school/security	134 (67% )	56 (28% )	10 (5%)	0 (0)	3.50	Agreed
10	Electricity	136 (68% )	54 (27% )	10 (5%)	0 (0)	3.51	Agreed
<b>Grand Mean Value</b>						<b>3.07</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

( $X \geq 2.5$  agreed otherwise disagreed)

The result presented in table 4 revealed the extent to which school facilities affect students' academic achievements of public schools. The mean values for item 1-5 are greater than 2.50 which indicated that majority of the respondents indicated that Desk, chairs (3.50), Teaching aids (2.99), Electric generators for hostels/classrooms (2.60), Blackboard for classroom/laboratories (3.51), Calculator/specimens/laboratory equipment (3.05), Desktop & Laptop for office use (2.82), Sport facilities (2.60), School health facilities (school nurse) (2.69), Fencing of the school/security (3.50) and Electricity (3.51) affect students' academic achievements. The grand mean value (3.07) in the table was high which implies that the extent to which school facilities affect students' academic achievements.

### *Test of Hypotheses*

**Hypothesis 1:** The qualities of the physical environment with regard to school building do not have significant effect on the academic achievements of secondary school students in Social Studies classroom.

**Table 3: Chi-square Statistics for effect of qualities of physical environment on the academic achievements of students**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Table value	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square <sup>b</sup>	15.561 <sup>a</sup>	1	.000	6.960	.000*
Continuity Correction	14.349	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	13.869	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear					
Association	15.526	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases <sup>b</sup>	200				

\* $P < 0.05$  (Significant)

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The result of analysis presented in Table 5 revealed that Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) calculated value (15.561) was greater than Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) table value (6.96) at 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that the null hypothesis one was rejected. Hence, the qualities of the physical school environment with regard to school building have significant effect on the academic achievements.

**Hypothesis 2:** The school facilities do not have significant effect on students' academic achievements in public secondary schools in Ikere Local Government area of Ekiti State.

**Table 4: Chi-square Statistics for effect of school facilities on the academic achievements of students**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Table value	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.260 <sup>a</sup>	1	.000	6.960	.000
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	9.490	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	9.755	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.099	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases <sup>b</sup>	200				

The result of analysis presented in table 8 revealed that Chi-Square ( $X^2$ ) calculated value (10.260) was greater than Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) table value (6.96) at 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, school facilities have significant effect on the academic achievements of students.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study revealed the extent to which quality of the physical school environment with regard to school building affect the academic achievements of students was high. This is an indication that offices for staff, reading rooms for students, dining hall for students, classroom spaces for teaching students, common room for teachers and hall for exams and others affect the academic achievements of students. The grand mean value (2.95) in the table was high which implies the extent to which quality of the physical school environment with regard to school building affects the academic achievements of students in Social Studies classroom.

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**Implication for Pedagogy and Quality Assurance in Social Studies Classroom in Nigeria**

Education, as a socialising agent, serves as a means by which a society's ideals, aspirations, wants, cultural norms, and legacy may be transmitted to the next generation. The cultural traditions of the community are protected and ensured this way. According to Famuyibo (2015), the goal of a Social Studies education is to help students develop their minds by exposing them to a variety of disciplines that all focus on one thing: man. Ekiugbo (2015) noted that the Social Studies curriculum aims to The goal of education is the same as that of the entire school curriculum: to assist young people develop their critical thinking and emotional maturity.

It is obvious that schools can only function to their full potential if they provide a conducive environment for learning. Students do better academically when they are in a positive school environment. A warm and welcoming school community conveys care and support by providing a safe and secure learning environment. Therefore, a conducive learning environment is essential for effective instruction and, ultimately, for students to succeed on both internal and external assessments.

### **Recommendations**

For quality assurance to be achieved in Social Studies classroom, the following are suggested and recommended.

1. When sufficient resources are available, quality control in schools across the country may be implemented. The quality of school buildings, library resources, school locations, and other educational amenities will undoubtedly be affected.
2. The lack of movement in the field of Social Studies education may be combated with the use of a quality recruitment strategy. The antidote is right here. The educational system has become paralysed due to a glitch. Paralysis might be caused by anything that affects the nerves. If this is the case, it's possible that the entire educational system may grind to a halt owing to a dearth of qualified educators. To drastically raise the quality of classroom instructors, Ekiugbo (2015) argued for the promotion of full-time, part-time, and ad hoc educational programmes.
3. Third, when teaching Social Studies, teachers should pay close attention to their own pedagogical approaches. The three pillars of Ekiugbo's (2015) taxonomy of pedagogical approaches that constitute the foundation of Social Studies education in Nigeria—information transmission, skill development, and value and attitude formation—should be emphasised in the classroom. This is due to the fact that today's schools are expected to provide students with higher-order cognitive abilities like problem-solving and critical thinking, which enable self-development and ongoing learning. All of the above are possible because of the conducive educational climate provided by a decent school environment with appropriate school resources.

Conclusively, there is the need for secondary school to put in place good physical environment to motivate students to learn. Government at all levels should also assist and support to build modern learning infrastructures to facilitate learning and improved academic performances.

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