
**SOCIAL STUDIES EXPERTS' AND NON- SOCIAL STUDIES
EXPERTS' KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTION OF
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN OKE-OGUN
AREA OF OYO STATE**

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Abstract

This paper was born out of the fact that the teaching of Social Studies has become more competitive among the experts and non-experts in secondary schools. The study adopted a descriptive design of the survey type. Fifty respondents were chosen from 25 secondary schools in Oke-Ogun Zone 1 Area of Oyo State. Questionnaire used to collect data for the study bothered on the knowledge and perception of Social Studies teachers on same environmental education topics embedded in the Social Studies curriculum. Two hypotheses was generated to guide the study and the data collected were analyzed using inferential statistics. The results of the findings showed variation between the experts and non-experts. It was recommended among others that Social Studies experts should be allowed to teach the environmental education topics in Social Studies.

Keywords: Environmental Education, Social Studies, Knowledge and Perception.

Introduction

Human activities, as a result of the quest and search for quality standard of living through advancement in science and technology, have brought

problems on the environment in all part of the country, ranging from pollution, drought, bush burning, erosion and many more. This has made people as well as the government developed interest in environmental education because its support for human existence is fundamental. It is therefore, a must for human to live in harmony within the earth's ecosystem, according to Okorodudu-Fuhara (1998). It further stated that in the wake of science and technology, human's advancement has greatly intruded the supporting web of the environment which has continued to threaten the very existence of human. The environment must therefore be seemed if the survival of humans is to be secured and there must be a regulation of human's activities regarding the abuse of the natural environment in order to ensure reasonable harmonies and healthy relationship with the environment (Tiamiyu & Badmus, 2019).

Environmental education is one of the fundamental issues of human existence that should be promoted among all and sundry. Environmental awareness and actions will go a long way to minimizing the problems of environmental pollution and enhancing people's quality of life in Nigeria. Through environmental education, the individual and society will gain better awareness of their environment and acquire the relevant knowledge, values, skills and experience that will spur them to act collectively and individually to solve present and future environmental problems (Ogunyemi, 1994).

Tsuma (1998) notes that environmental education is vital for the survival of mankind. He observes that without educating masses especially in early years of schooling, they will continue to mismanage and destroy the environment on which their existence depends. The misuse of natural resources and the degradation of the environment may threaten human survival if they proceed unchecked (UNEQ, 1998). There are two approaches adopted by social studies educators used in teaching environmental education in secondary schools. That is interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches (Ombech, 1991; KIE, 1997, L'Omudwo, 1999). In the interdisciplinary approaches environmental education is taken as a unit and draws subject matter from existing discipline such as social studies while in the multidisciplinary approach, the disciplines and subjects use the environment as a resource of their teaching. Educators may not be familiar with the variety of interdisciplinary or

multidisciplinary approaches available in dealing with environmental issues. This is because environmental education is a relatively new discipline and the trend in teacher education is increasingly oriented towards specialization. He further observed that effective oriented environmental education may not be allowed in the rigid institutional structures of certain educational establishments due to increased compartmentalization and specialization (Otiende, 1991). The inclusion of environmental education in the already crowded curriculum, environmental education importance may justify its inclusion or create a separate curriculum. This is because the learner needs to be given an opportunity to understand, analyse, investigate and proffer solutions to environmental issues (Kiarie, 2016).

Environmental education in Nigeria is faced with various lacuna among them are environmental education is not taken as a separate subject, thus making it to be rated as less importance to some examinable subject. Through successive government have been making efforts to create separate curriculum or incorporate across existing subject. As Nigeria aims at becoming industrialized economy in years to come, it has to ensure that environmental education is provided a place in the school curriculum in both secondary and post-secondary education. This will help to find a balance between the utilization of natural resources and economic growth (Murgor, 1999; Kiarie, 2016). Cutter (2001) agreed that the problems associated with the implementation of environmental education are due to perceived lack of adequate pre-service and in-service training on environmental education in the subject where it's covered. Through Nigeria has had several environmental initiatives over the last decade with noticeable impact on the environment, much still need to be done to ensure the quality of the environment is maintained (K'Omnidho, 1999).

Social Studies teacher is one of the personnel to implementation of environmental education. Social Studies teacher is to ensure that teaching of environmental education is well tailored according to the Social Studies curriculum in secondary schools. Social Studies as one of the subjects that housed environmental education can be defined as a programme of study in which the society uses to instill in students the required knowledge and perception and actions considered important concerning the relationship human

being has with each other, their world and themselves (Kissork, 1981; Fasiku, 2021). Social Studies being a problem-solving subject becomes an avenue through which a required knowledge, perception, skills and actions considered important can be obtained to solve ever increasing practical environmental problems and enhance sustainable development. In order to achieve the above stated objectives and other important ones, the concept environmental education needs to be handled by specialist or a qualified Social Studies teachers (Fasiku, 2011).

The study adopted project's theory of constructivism. The theory beliefs that learners are a clean slate on which the knowledge of others is simply comprehensive. It further stated that learning occurs as a result of dynamic interaction between the learner and the environment, the most important factor influencing learning takes place when the new ideal can be integrated into the learner's previous experience (Word, 2008, Duit & Komorek, 2010 quoted by Babalola, 2020).

Consequently, upon this background, it appears that some schools were not adequately started with Social Studies experts that can adequately propagate the teaching of some environmental education concepts in Social Studies. The paper therefore tends to determine the Social Studies and non-Social Studies teachers' perception of environmental education in Oke-Ogun zone one area of Oyo State.

The objectives of this study were to:

- i. examine Social Studies experts and non-experts' knowledge of environmental education; and
- ii. determine Social Studies expert and non-experts' knowledge of environmental education.

Hypotheses

- i. There is no significant difference between the Social Studies experts and non-experts' knowledge of environmental education
- ii. There is no significant difference in the knowledge of environmental education among Social Studies expert and non-expert

Methods

This is a descriptive design of the survey type. The population for the study consisted of selected teacher teaching Social Studies irrespective of their area of specialization in Oke-Ogun zone 1 area of Oyo State. The 50 respondents used in the study were randomly selected from 25 secondary schools in Oke-Ogun zone one which comprises of Iseyin, Kajola, Itesiwaju and Iwajowa Local Government Areas respectively.

A questionnaire was developed by the researcher to gather the needed data. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section focuses on demographic information of the teachers in terms of name of school, sex, area of specialization, highest academic qualification. The second section consisted of ten statements on knowledge and perception of environmental education topics in the Social Studies. The validity of the instrument was ascertained by some expert in test and measurement and Social Studies education. Split half method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument, which yielded 0.81 coefficients. The data collected were analysed by descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the Knowledge of Social Studies Expert and Non-Social Studies Expert on Environmental Education

Table 1: Difference between the Knowledge of Social Studies Expert and Non-Social Studies Expert on Environmental Education

Variable	N	X	SD	T. Cal	T-Table
Experts	30	10.08	1.07	1.11	0.65
Non-experts	20	9.27	1.34		

Source: *Author Analysis, 2025.*

Note: $P < 0.05$ level of significant source.

The result in the table 1 shows that t-cal is greater than the t-table. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that, there is

difference between the knowledge of expert and non-expert Social Studies teacher. This attempted that Social Studies teacher possess knowledge the teaching of environmental education has some environmental topics are included in Social Studies curriculum. This finding was in line with Tiamiyu and Badmus, (2019) which agreed that Social Studies trainee's have adequate knowledge of some of the environmental education topics.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the perception of the relevance of expert and non-expert Social Studies teachers to environmental education

Table 3: Perception of the relevance of expert and non-expert Social Studies teachers to environmental education

Variable	N	X	SD	T. Cal	T-Table
Experts	30	10.08	1.07	1.11	0.65
Non-experts	20	9.27	1.34		

Source: *Author analysis, 2025.*

At 0.05 level of significant that $t\text{-cal} = (1.11)$ while $t\text{-table} = (0.65)$ at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the null hypothesis is rejected. This showed that there was a significant difference between the perception of Social Studies experts and non-specialist teachers. The mean showed that Social Studies experts displayed positive knowledge and perception to the teaching of environmental education in Oke-Ogun zone 1 area of Oyo State.

Discussions

The specialist teacher in Social Studies demonstrated high level of understanding of the subject matter that the non-specialist Social Studies teachers of environmental education. The result from the findings of the table one shows that $t\text{-calculated}$ is higher than $t\text{-table}$ of 0.65, this shows that there is difference in the knowledge of Social Studies specialist and environmental education this was in line with the submission of Fasiku (2021) that there is clear difference between specialist and non-specialist. Therefore, specialists were well disposed and have the knowledge of environmental education.

It was revealed in the table two that Social Studies expert demonstrated high sense and perception of the relevance of environmental education as the t-cal of 1.11 is greater than t-table of 0.65, this shows that Social Studies expert perceived environmental education to be very important concept to be taught in Social Studies. The study corroborated the study carried out by Tihamiyu and Badmus (2019) which revealed that Social Studies teacher trainees perceived the relevance of environmental education topic by topic.

Conclusion

From the findings of this research, it could be concluded that Social Studies specialist have adequate knowledge of environmental education and also consider the relevance of environmental education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was recommended that Social Studies expert should be allowed to teach Social Studies because of some of the environmental education topics embedded in the subject. It was also recommended that government should employ more Social Studies experts to replace some of the seconded or non-specialist teachers to teach the subject for better capturing and understanding of some environmental education topics embedded in the subject.

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