

# Influence of Location on Knowledge and Attitudes of Social Studies Teachers' To Environmental Education in Junior Secondary School in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

*The study determined influence of location on knowledge and attitude of social studies teachers' to environmental education in junior secondary schools in Ekiti State. A descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for the paper. The population was made up of all social studies teachers in junior secondary schools in Ekiti State and the sample consisted of one hundred and twenty-five social studies teachers. The multi-stage random sampling technique was used to select the sample. A self-designed questionnaire was used to gather information from the respondents. The data collected were analysed using percentage score and t-test analysis. The hypotheses raised were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that the social studies teachers in urban areas possessed full knowledge of environmental education and dispose positive attitudes than their counterparts in the rural areas. It was therefore recommended that social studies teachers in the rural areas should see the need to expose their students to some environmental challenges and also dispose positive attitude towards the environmental education. Also, the social studies teachers in the rural areas should be encouraged to attend conferences, seminars and workshops on environmental education so as to update their knowledge on environmental issues.*

**Keywords:** Social Studies Teachers, Environmental Education, Knowledge, Attitude

## Introduction

Environment in any society contributes a larger percentage to the wellbeing of man. It also determines the level of his achievement in all ramification be it in social, physical, economical and cultural aspects of life. This means that, as man influences environment the environment will in turn influences the health and sustainability of man.

According to Akinbode (2002), Environment is the totality of the places and the surrounding in which we live, work and interact with other people in our cultural, political and socio-economic activities for the advancement of our communities, societies or nation. The activities of man have greatly and adversely affected the natural environment, in that man dumps refuse indiscriminately thereby polluting the air and causing erosion and flood, he clears bushes for farming thereby destroying ecosystem, laying of oil pipes and pipe leakages causes oil spillage, water pollution and destroyed the aquatic animals in most of the oil producing states in the country. Moreover, emission of

gases from the industrial product causes ozone layer depletion and host of others. It is crystal clear from the importance of Environmental Education that the increasing relationship between the quality of life and quality of our environment has revealed that unless more attention is paid to the environment we are in danger of lowering the quality and standard of our lives (Abdallan and Nzokusun 2013).

Environmental Education (EE) is a concept in Social Studies; it is gradually gaining popularity and finding its way into virtually all science and social science subjects. Social studies as a problem solving subject has been variously defined by many authors. Kissock (1981) defined social studies as a programme of study which the society use to instill in students the knowledge, skill, attitude and actions considered important concerning the relationship human being has with each other and themselves. Adaralegbe (1980) submitted that the subject is the totality of experiences a student goes through having been exposed to such a course based on man's interminable problems in chosen environment with full knowledge of the variable factors that aids normal interaction with his environment.

Environmental Education (EE) is a complex process covering not just events, but a strong underlying approach to society

building as a whole and as well provides people with the awareness of their environment and acquire knowledge, skills, values experiences and the determination needed to build partnership, understand NGO activities, develop participatory approaches to planning in order to solve present and future environmental problems. This definition of Environmental Education turns on the spectacular theme of understanding the intricate relationship between man and his Environment. Ogunyemi (1994) conceived Environmental Education as a global movement whose root could be traced back to the 1972 Stockholm's conference and the theme was to make people aware and be concerned about their environment hence the popular saying "Act locally and think globally".

With regard to the Local Government, Environmental Education should be viewed as learning about the environment, from the environment and for the environment (Yoloye, 1982). Sia (1992) noted in his research on pre-service elementary teacher's perceived efficacy in teaching Environmental Education, that there is need to address training in Environmental Education teaching among pre-service teachers by either integrating environmental themes across disciplines or through a separate course.

According to Okoye (2007), Environmental Education is a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of man's problem. Problem of maintaining a liveable earth and it is through Environmental Education that the solution to the problems of Environmental degradation and other problems could be realized. Environmental Education just like any other broad area of education has no precise and universally acceptable definition but it is variously defined by some authors (Mezieobi, 2013). Martin (1990) opined that Environmental Education is such an education that helps people to understand the forces that determine human behaviour in relation to the environment, whether this be natural environment or "Man made environment of agriculture, towns and cities".

This concept according to UNESCO (1980) conference recommendation that says a basic aim of Environmental Education is to succeed in making individuals and communities understand the complex nature from the interaction of their biological, physical, social, economic and cultural aspects and acquire the knowledge, values, attitude and practical skills to participate in a responsible and effective way in anticipating and solving social problems

and in the management of the quality of the environment (Mezieobi, 2013)

For the Materialises of above, there is need for an understanding of the natural environment and the impact of human activity on the environment, the chances of preserving an inhabitable planet for future generation are not very promising through social studies teachers who are well groomed with the knowledge acquisition and skill in Environmental Education and who are ready to pass it across to the learners (Fasiku, 2011).

It appears some social studies teachers in urban areas possess more knowledge about Environmental Education than those that live in rural areas. It has also been observed that in urban areas, what constitutes the environment affect them than those in the non-urban area as a result of this the urban dwellers especially the social studies teachers seem to be more conscious, active and quick witted in the way they go about combating the environmental problems. For instance, people in urban areas have a very wide range of knowledge to take part in Environmental sanitation exercise known as "war against fifth" than those in the rural areas. Based on this, teachers in urban areas (social studies teachers) appear to be well exposed to all these environmental menace with the striking

examples around them to educate the teaching of the subject to the students than their counterpart who dwell in the rural areas where environmental issues are not prominent. Based on this backdrop, the study is to find out the influence of location on the knowledge and attitudes of Social Studies Teachers' to Environmental Education in junior secondary school in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

### **Literature Review**

The location where one lives has a much robust influence on the way and manner we react to issues concerning the environment that is to say, the reaction of people in the urban area, based on what they experience in their vicinity will be different from the people living in the rural area.

Abdallan and Nzokusun (2013) posited that human beings need to experience a sense of connectedness to the natural world. They however, stressed further that many children are increasingly growing up in the environment which are far remote to ensure direct positive experience with the natural world. It is equally stressed that other children live far more closer to nature than the other groups. One could therefore see that the influence of the location on the teachers will go a long way in influencing the life of the children in that they can only give

what they have and not what they do not have in terms of knowledge acquisition.

For more recognition about the environment, students need frequent positive experience with nature not to grow in the understanding of what natural world is like but also to grow, in the understanding of whom they are regardless of their living circumstances.

Observation shows that majority of the social studies teachers in the rural areas did not have more knowledge about environmental challenges. On this note, the contribution of author is appraisable.

Based on the analysis above, this paper is to examine the influence of locations on knowledge and attitude of social studies teachers' to Environmental Educations in junior secondary schools in Ekiti State.

According to Ibikunle-Johnson and Rugumgo (1987) Environmental Education is an integrated process which deals with man's inter-relationship with nature and man-made surroundings. This is to provide awareness, concern and action that are needed for the protection and preservation of man's natural environment. From above, it was gathered that man needs to treasure the natural environment in order to sustain it.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised for the study.

1. Is there any difference between the knowledge of social studies teachers in the rural and urban areas to Environmental Education?
2. Is there any difference between the attitude of social studies teachers in the rural and urban areas to Environmental Education?

### Research Hypotheses

For the purpose of this research work the following hypotheses were postulated for testing.

1. There is no significant difference between the knowledge of social studies teachers in the rural and urban area to Environmental Education.
2. There is no significant difference between the attitude of social studies teachers in the rural and urban areas to Environmental Education.

### Methodology

The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for this study. The population consisted of all Social Studies Teachers in Junior Secondary Schools in Ekiti State. One hundred and twenty-five Social Studies Teachers were selected through multistage random sampling technique. Five local

Governments were randomly selected from sixteen local Governments after which five schools from each local Government were randomly selected making twenty-five schools in all. In each of the schools five social studies teachers were randomly selected through simple random sampling technique. The instrument used was a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher to elicit information and ascertained by some experts in item analysis in Test, Measurement and Evaluation, Environmental studies and Social Studies expert. Test re-test reliability method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument and a coefficient of 0.76 was obtained. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using percentage and t-test statistical tool. The two hypotheses postulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

### Results

The results of the research questions and hypotheses were presented below.

#### Research question 1

Is there any difference between the knowledge of social studies teachers in the rural and urban areas to Environmental Education?

**Table 1:** - Social Studies teachers' knowledge of Environmental Education

Variables		Frequency	Percentage %
Rural	Low Knowledge	50	40.0
Urban	High Knowledge	75	60.0
Total		125	100.0

Table 1 above shows that 40% of the rural area respondents have low knowledge of Environmental Education while 60% of the urban area respondents possessed high knowledge of Environmental Education. This indicates that some of the Social Studies Teachers in rural areas handling Social Studies in junior secondary school

have low level of knowledge in Environmental Education.

### Research Question 2

Is there any difference between the attitude of Social Studies Teachers in the rural and urban areas to Environmental Education?

**Table 2:** - Attitudes of Social Studies Teachers in the rural and urban areas to Environmental Education

Variables		Frequency	Percentage %
Rural	Negative attitude	23	18.4
Urban	Positive attitude	102	81.6
Total		125	100.0

Table 2 above shows that 18.4% of the rural area respondents have positive attitude towards the teaching of Environmental Education while the urban area counterpart disposed 81.6% attitude to the concept of Environmental Education. It implies that the social studies teachers in urban areas disposed positive attitude

towards teaching of Environmental Education than rural areas Social Studies Teachers.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between the knowledge of Social Studies Teachers in the rural and urban area to Environmental Education.

**Table 3:** Summary of Rural and Urban Social Studies Teachers Environmental Education.

Variables	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	t-table
Rural	50	16.18	2.17	123	4.10	1.96
Urban	75	17.55	1.55			

P < 0.05 (significant)

Table 3 above shows the t-cal value is 4.10 while t-table value is 1.96. The t-cal value is greater than the t- table values therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This is to say that, there is a significant difference between the knowledge of social studies teachers in urban and rural areas. The social studies teachers in urban areas

possess full knowledge of Environmental Education.

**Hypothesis 2:**

There is no significant difference between the attitude of Social Studies Teachers in the urban and rural areas to Environmental Education.

**Table 4:** Attitude of Social Studies Teachers in urban and rural areas to Environmental Education

Variables	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	t-table
Rural	23	29.57	4.00	123	0.194	1.960
Urban	102	29.73	3.48			

$P > 0.05$  (significant)

The table 4 above shows that the t-cal value is 0.194 while the t-table value is 1.960 the table value is more than the t-cal value. Therefore the null hypothesis is not rejected. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the attitude of Social Studies Teachers in urban and rural areas to Environmental Education. It simply means that the Social Studies Teacher in urban areas and rural area always disposes positive attitude to Environmental Education.

**Discussion**

The finding which was on influence of location on knowledge and attitude of Social Studies Teachers' to environmental Education, revealed that there is a significant difference between the knowledge of Social Studies Teachers in

rural and urban areas to environmental education as the social studies teachers in urban areas have the higher mean. This is in line with the study background, that in urban areas, the dwellers are more conscious, active and quick witted in the way they go about combating the environmental problems due to their high level of exposure to all environmental menace than their counterpart who dwell in the rural areas. Rao and Rasmussen, (1988), asserted that the third world countries are becoming centres for the production of hazardous chemicals with imported technology from the advanced Nation and these generate hazardous wastes in the urban slums of the third world. One could agree that both rural and

urban centres have their own dose of the environmental knowledge, but the full knowledge is of greater magnitude in urban areas than rural areas.

It was noted from one of the findings that, there was no significant difference between the attitudes of social studies teachers in urban and rural areas to Environmental Education which made the researcher to accept the null hypothesis. This was in line with the finding of Noibi (1982) that a very relative difference exists between the attitude of Social Studies Teachers in urban area and non – urban area to Environmental Education.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

There is no gainsaying the fact that location has a great influence on the knowledge and attitude of Social Studies Teachers to Environmental Education. It is submitted that urban Social Studies Teachers were very fast in the knowledge of Environmental Education than rural Social Studies Teachers. It was further discovered that urban Social Studies Teachers disposed positive attitude to the teaching of Environmental Education than their rural counterpart. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the rural Social Studies Teachers should be encouraged to attend seminars, conferences and workshops on Environmental Education so as to update

their knowledge on environmental issues. It was also recommended that rural Social Studies Teachers should develop positive attitude to the teaching of Environmental Education and Social Studies Teachers' in the urban areas should maintain their positive attitude towards attending to all environmental issues.

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