
ATTITUDE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN EKITI STATE: IMPLICATIONS FOR SECURITY OF LIFE AND PROPERTY

¹ J. B. Ayodele and ²B. K. Akinlade

Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education,
Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti.

Department of Social Science Education, Ekiti State University,
Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria.

Abstract

This study investigated the attitude of secondary school students towards environmental issues in Ekiti State, Nigeria. This study further investigated the influence of location and sex on secondary school students' attitude towards environmental issues in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study employed the descriptive research design of the survey type. The population of the study comprised 42,551 senior secondary school students in Ekiti State. The sample consisted of 467 senior secondary school students whose selection was based on multistage sampling procedure. An instrument tagged 'Attitude towards Environmental Issues Questionnaire' (ATEIQ) was used to collect data for the study. The face and content validity of the instrument were ensured. The reliability of the instrument was determined through test re-test method which yielded reliability coefficient of 0.67. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation as well as inferential statistics of t-test analysis. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of this study revealed that the attitude of students towards environmental issue was positive. The study revealed that there was no significant difference between the attitude of male and female secondary school students on environmental issues. It was however discovered from the study that there was significant difference between the attitude of urban and rural secondary school students towards environmental issues. The implication is that negative environmental attitude is dangerous to security of life and property. Based on the findings, it was recommended that environmental field trip should be encouraged among secondary school students to ameliorate indifference attitude of students towards environmental issues.

Keywords: Attitude, Students, Secondary School, Environment, Environmental issues, location, Security of life and property.

Introduction

Attitude is a concept, which arises from the attempt to account for the observed regularities in the behavior of individual persons, the quality of which is judged from the observed evaluative responses one tends to make. An individual can show positive or negative attitude towards a particular object, subject or idea. Kind, Jones and Barmby, (2007) viewed attitude as having different components which includes cognitive (knowledge, beliefs and ideas); affective (feeling, like, dislike,) and behavioral (tendency towards an action). Aminrad, Sharifah, and Abdul-Samad (2011) stated that the attitude that one has towards an object makes one to make judgment as to whether the object is good or bad, harmful or beneficial, pleasant or unpleasant important or unimportant.

Attitude, according to Ibimilua and Ibimilua (2014), is an acquisitioned tendency. The authors explained further that students form attitude through either like or dislike, favourable or unfavourable. Williams as cited by Ezeudu, Ezeudu, O. and Sampson, (2016) defined attitude as readiness to act in a certain way expressed by a person's words, gestures or facial expression. Bases of environmental attitudes is to indicate that, it is what people feel and believe about the environment that determines their attitudes toward it. Paço and Lavrador (2017) observed that attitude towards environment has been the major concern of commentators on environmental issues like pollution, flood, erosion, climate change, deforestation and desertification in recent times, for instances floods are among the most

devastating natural disasters in the world, claiming more lives and causing more property damage than any other natural phenomena. Penning-Rowsell et al and Keith cited by Nkwunonwo (2016) indicated that flooding along with its severe impacts on human lives, properties and economic activities is globally acknowledged.

In Nigeria, though not leading in terms of claiming lives, flood affects and displaces more people than any other disaster. It also causes more damage to properties. According to Etuonovbe (2011) not less than 20 per cent of the population is at risk from one form of flooding or another. For instance, in 2012, Al Jazeera & News Agencies reported that Nigeria suffered disastrous floods across 30 of its 36 states where hundred of people died, and some two million people were left homeless. Precisely from June to October 2012, Policy Brief (2012) reported that Nigeria has witnessed some of the most widespread incidence of catastrophic flooding. The Policy Brief (2012) further expressed that there are incidences of overflowing rivers and blocking drainages. Dams are under the threat of being completely submerged by overflowing reservoirs with excess water from the reservoirs flowing out uncontrollably. Thus, the result of all these have been devastating flood disasters, affecting up to 50 or 70 percent of states in the country.

In Ekiti state flooding issues have equally affected lives and properties, especially at the state capital where population and development is fast growing. For example, in 2017, a 33 year-old commercial motorcyclist was confirmed dead by Police in Ado-Ekiti. It was reported that the deceased was swept away by the flood along with his motorbike, while trying to cross a bridge built on Elemi River at Ayemi, along Iworoko Road in the state capital. However, the disaster stem from poor attitude displayed by the motorcyclist when he ignored the entreaties and admonitions by motorists and other commercial motorcyclists, who had earlier failed in their attempt to cross the channel and had decided to wait for the water to recede (The Punch, 2017). Consistent with theories of attitudes, environmentally

responsible behaviour appears to be more strongly connected with willingness to make sacrifices than with attitude toward the environment. Ishaya and Abaje (2008) noted secondary school teachers have been inculcating climate change contents infused into their respective subjects to the students with the intention of influencing their attitude positively towards solving the problems of climate change. Similarly, Oruonye (2011) carried out assessment of the level of awareness of the effects of climate change among students in Jalingo Metropolis of Tabara State. The study found that the students used for the study are not aware of climate change and that they possessed low attitude towards climate change.

According to Jekayinfa and Yusuf (2008), there have been series of environmental protection measures introduced in Nigeria. Some of these include the abatement measure, environmental awareness campaign, environmental legislations, environmental policies, afforestation and land reclamation. Environmental sanitation exercises are put in place, conferences are organized, and environmental organizations such as Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) and Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) are established. In addition, the environmentally responsible behaviour of many of the senior secondary students seems to be inadequate and that environmental education does not advocate a particular viewpoint or course of action. Rather, environmental education teaches individuals how to weigh various sides of an issue through critical thinking and it enhances their own problem-solving and decision-making skills. The way an individual perceives environmental issues such as good quality of environment, desertification, atmospheric pollution among others could be influenced by the expectations roles. Sex relations influence how communities, household and institution are organised, how decisions are made and how resources are utilized. Sex shapes the activities that affect the environment by examine women's and men's roles, their responsibilities, access to and control over resources, knowledge and participation in decision making. A study was carried out by Sarkar (2011) in Bangladesh on girls and boys attitude

across urban and rural contexts. The study found that overall students from both the urban and rural areas expressed favourable environmental attitudes with girls having a significantly higher level of favourable environmental attitudes than boys; in particular, rural girls had displayed more positive environmental attitudes comparing among others.

Furthermore, location of individuals could also affect their attitudes towards the environment. In human settlements, urban stands for an area that is characterized by high human population and vast human-built infrastructures in comparison to the areas surrounding it. Cities, towns, conurbations are examples of urban areas.

Human settlements are classified as rural or urban depending on the density of human-created structures and resident people in a particular area. Urban areas can include towns and cities while rural areas include villages and hamlets. Lance (2017) stated that, while rural settlements are based more on natural resources and events, the urban population receives the benefits of man's advancements in the areas of science and technology and is not nature-dependent for its day to day functions.

Small and Nicholis (2003) defined urban areas as relatively large, characterized with dense and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals. The settlement could be towns, cities, metropolis or even conurbations. The above contrasts between the urban and rural areas could influence students' attitudes towards their environment, also where people live (location) determined how much information that gets to them. According to United Nations Development Programme UNDP, (2010) attitudes of the rural dwellers in Nigeria on environmental issues could be directly proportional to the quality of information prevalent and available to them.

Statement of the problem

It seems the result of the day-to-day activities of people has contributed largely to

environmental degradation which has led to environmental threats to security of life and property occurring in many forms. Proofs of secondary school students' nonchalant attitude towards environment are noticed in their surroundings especially in public places in Ekiti State. The problem now is how to impart the right attitude towards environment in students. This could be done by examining students' attitude towards environmental issues in Ekiti State.

The emergency of today global environmental crisis cannot be isolated from the emergent implication resulting from activities of man on his immediate environment as dated back in the history. Inevitably, there has been heated debate about what has caused environmental crisis such as pollution, deforestation, overpopulation, industrial and household waste, ozone layer depletion and acid rain among others. Although, many different and at time conflicting suggestions have been made about what the most important root causes might be. Information could lead to positive changes in attitude. This study is geared to examine the attitude of secondary school students toward environmental issues.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the attitude of secondary school students towards environmental issues in Ekiti State. This study further examined the influence of sex and location on the attitude of senior secondary school students towards environmental issues.

Research Questions

The following research question was raised to pilot the study:

What is the attitude of secondary school students towards environmental issue?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between male and female secondary school students' attitudes towards environmental issues.
2. There is no significant difference between urban and rural secondary

school students' attitudes towards environmental issues.

Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the outcome of this study would be of great benefit to students, teachers, environmental educators, government and the general public. The outcome of the study could sensitise the students and general public on their responsibilities on how to improve their environment in anticipation of promoting sustainable development. This would ensure a secured environment for lives and properties.

Methodology

The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for this study. The population of the study consisted of all public senior secondary school students in Ekiti State. The sample of this study consisted of 467 senior secondary school students selected from the three senatorial districts in Ekiti State using

multistage sampling procedure. An instrument designed by the researcher tagged "Attitude towards Environmental Issues Questionnaire" (ATEIQ) was used to collect relevant data for the study. The validity of instrument was ensured by expert in Social Studies and Tests, Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was determined with the use of test- retest method within the period of two weeks. The reliability coefficient of 0.67 was obtained, and it was found suitable for the study. The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. All these hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question: What is the attitude of secondary school students towards environmental issues?

Table 1: Secondary School Students' attitude towards environmental issues

Attitude towards environmental issues	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
Positive (40-80.0)	393	84.2		
Negative (20.0-40)	74	15.8	42.8	5.402
Total	467	100.0		

Results presented in table 1 showed that 393, representing 84.2% of the students, have positive attitude towards environmental issue. This result can be attributed to the fact that most of the respondents believe they can make positive change towards solving environmental problems. It was also revealed that 74 representing 15.8% of the respondents have negative attitude towards environmental issue.

From the results obtained it can therefore be concluded that most of the students have positive attitude towards environmental issues in their environment.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between male and female secondary school students' attitudes towards environmental issues.

Table 2: t-test on the difference between male students and female students' attitude towards environmental issues

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	t _{cal}	P
Male Attitude	232	42.5	0.711	465	0.609	0.110
Female Attitude	235	43.1	0.816			

p > 0.05

In table 2, data obtained showed that $t(465) = 0.609$, $p > 0.05$. The null hypothesis is accepted. The result implies that gender has no influence on students' attitude towards environmental issues. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the attitude of male and

female secondary school students on environmental issues.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between urban and rural secondary school students' attitudes towards environmental issues.

Table 3: t-test on the difference between attitude of urban and rural secondary school students towards environmental issues

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t _{cal}	P
Urban students	235	39.0	0.733	465	3.249*	0.010
Rural Students	232	46.6	0.781			

*p < 0.05

From table 3, data obtained revealed that $t(465)=3.249$, $p=0.010<0.05$. The null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, there was a significant difference between the attitude of urban secondary school students and attitude of rural secondary school students on environmental issues. This implies that location influenced students' attitude towards environmental issues.

Discussion

Findings revealed that the attitude of students towards environmental issue was positive. This findings could be connected to previous knowledge gained from classroom or perhaps, they might have been affected (in one way or the other) with environmental problems. The majority of the students failed to give the knowledge acquired on the environmental issues a top priority as they interacts with the environment. However, the result formed a reflection on the findings of Ishaya & Abaje (2008) who noted that secondary school teachers have been inculcating climate change contents infused into their respective subjects to the students with the intention of influencing their attitude positively towards solving the problems of climate change.

The study revealed that there was no significant difference between the attitude of male and female secondary school students on environmental issues. The result implies that their attitude towards environmental issues is corresponding to their level of environmental education and awareness which are no difference. However, the result was in agreement with Oruonye (2011) who noted that the different ways male and female are socialized tend to determined their environmental exploration, degree of environmental manipulation and overall relationship with the environment, including the general awareness and attitude towards environmental problems like climate change.

It was finally discovered from the study that there was significant difference between the attitude of urban and rural secondary school students towards environmental issues. It is possible that the differences in the attitude of urban and rural students towards environmental issues centered around the differences in their level of exposure to environmental challenges. For instance, rural students may be less exposed to noise pollution than the urban students while urban students may also be less exposed to bush burning than those in the rural area. Thus, Sarkar (2011) suggested that overall students from both the urban and rural areas expressed favourable environmental attitudes but with girls having a significantly higher level of favourable environmental attitudes than boys. Meaning that, non-challant environmental attitudes of either male or female secondary school students, irrespective of their location whether urban or rural area, have negative implication for security of their lives and properties. Attitude of student determines their interaction with their environment and environmental issues such as flooding, erosion and pollution. The above listed environmental issues can therefore leads to disasters such as accident, death, loss of houses and properties.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, it was concluded that sex did not affect secondary school student's attitude towards environmental issues in Ekiti State, while location affected secondary school student's attitude towards environmental issues in Ekiti State. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

Environmental field trip should be encouraged among secondary school students to allow knowledge transfer among rural and urban students and to ameliorate indifferent attitude of students towards environmental issues.

1. Both the teachers and the school administrators should give adequate

information on environmental issues to all secondary school students to assist them develop right attitude towards environmental issues.

2. Every level of government as well as every individual should work together

References

- Al Jazeera & News Agencies (2012). Nigeria hit by worst flooding in a generation. Retrieved October 12 from www.aljazeera.com/weather/2012/10/201210129319935818.html:02/07/2018.
- Aminrad, Z., Sharifah, Z. & Abdul Samad H. (2011). Influence of age and level of education on environmental awareness and attitude: Case study on Iranian students in Malaysian Universities. *The Social Sciences*, 6(1), 15-19.
- Etunovbe, A.K. (2006). Administering marine spaces: The problem of coastal erosion in Nigeria, a case study of Forcados South Point, Delta State. Shaping the Change, XXIII FIG Congress, Munich Germany, October, 8-13.
- Ezeudu, S. A.; Ezeudu, F. O. & Sampson, M. (2016). Climate change awareness and attitude of senior secondary students in Umuahia education zone of Abia state. *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies*, 3(3), 7-17.
- Ibimilua, F. O. & Ibimilua, A. F. (2014). Environmental challenges in Nigeria: Typology, spatial distribution, repercussions and way forward. *America International Journal of Social Science*, 3(2), 246-253.
- Ishaya, S. I & Abaje, I. B (2008). Indigenous people's perception on climate change and adaptation strategies in Jema'a local government area of Kaduna State, Nigeria. *Journal of Geography and Regional Planning*, 1(8), 138-143.
- Jekayinfa, A. A. & Yusuf, A. (2008). Teachers' opinions on the incorporation of environmental education in the Nigerian primary school curriculum. *Educational Research and Review*, 3 (11), 334-338.
- Kind, P. M.; Jones, K. & Barmby, P. (2007). Developing attitudes towards science measures. *International Journal Science Education* 29(7), 871-893.
- Lance, A. (2017). Difference between urban and rural: *Difference between.net*. September 28, <http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/difference-between-urban-and-rural/>. Retrieved March 19, 2018
- Nkwunonwo, U.C. (2016). A review of flooding and flood risk reduction in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Human Social Science*, 16(2), 23-41.
- Oruonye, E.D. (2011). An assessment of the level of awareness of the effects of climate change among students of tertiary institutions in Jalingo Metropolis, Taraba State Nigeria. *Journal of Geography and Regional Planning*, 4(9), 513-517.
- Paço, A., & Lavrador, T. (2017). Environmental knowledge and attitudes and behaviours towards energy consumption. *Journal of environmental management*, 197, 384-392.
- Policy Brief (2012). Floods in Nigeria: Revisiting states accountability on emergency responses/preparedness and disaster risk reduction in Nigeria. www.actionaid.org.
- Sarkar, M. (2011). Secondary students' environmental attitudes: The case of environmental education in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 1, 106 – 116.
- Small, C. & Nicholis, R.J. (2003). Coastal flooding and wetland loss in the 21st century: Changes under the climate scenario. *Global Environmental Change*. 14(5), 69-86.
- The Punch (2017). Flood kills okada rider in Ekiti. July 4, 2017. online news: Retrieved from <http://punchng.com/flood-kills-okada-rider-in-ekiti/-05/7/2018>.
- UNDP (2010). Human development rational: The real wealth of Nations, pathway to human development. (www.hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-2010). Retrieved February 11, 2018.