



Viewing secondary school students' behaviour through the lens of teachers' characteristics and classroom environment in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

Esther O. Durowoju¹, Chibueze Richard Alli²

¹Faculty of Education, University of Ilesa, Ilesa, Osun State, Nigeria

²Soyanwo Crescent, Aare Estate, Bodija, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

Corresponding email: durowojuesther@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This research explored how secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State, exhibit learning behaviors in relation to their teachers' characteristics or attributes and the classroom environment or setting. A descriptive survey approach was adopted, targeting all students and teachers in Ibadan, Oyo State. Using a multistage sampling method, 440 participants were selected, including 400 students and 40 teachers. Data collection was carried out with two structured questionnaires. The analysis incorporated both descriptive statistics (such as frequency, percentage, and mean) and inferential statistics (including t-tests and multiple regression analysis). The results indicated that 60% of the teachers were female and 40% were male, with 55% falling within the 35–44 age range and most having 6–10 years of teaching experience. The majority of teachers held either a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) or a Master's degree. Among the students, 55% were female, and 48% were aged between 13 and 15. Furthermore, 62% of fathers and 70% of mothers had completed tertiary education, with most parents being self-employed (48% of fathers and 54% of mothers). The students generally demonstrated positive learning behaviours (weighted average = 3.04). There were no notable differences in learning behaviors when comparing students by gender or age group. Teacher characteristics and the classroom environment together explained 92.4% of the variation in students' learning behaviours (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.924$, $p < 0.05$). Notably, the classroom environment was a significant predictor of learning behaviour ($\beta = 1.052$, $p < 0.05$), while teacher characteristics did not have a significant individual impact ($\beta = -0.120$, $p > 0.05$). These findings highlight the critical influence of the classroom environment on student learning behaviours, irrespective of teacher qualifications or experience. Based on these insights, it is recommended that school administrators focus on enhancing classroom conditions to promote student engagement and positive learning behaviours, regardless of students' gender or age.

ARTICLE INFO

Received : Apr. 4, 2025

Revised : June 7, 2025

Accepted : June 30, 2025

KEYWORDS

Academic Performance,
Classroom Environment,
Professional Development,
Students' Learning Behavior,
Teacher characteristics

Suggested Citation (APA Style 7th Edition):

Durowoju, E.O. & Alli, C.R. (2025). Viewing secondary school students' behaviour through the lens of teachers' characteristics and classroom environment in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. *International Research Journal of Science, Technology, Education, and Management*, 5(2), 12-24.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15893434>

INTRODUCTION

Students' learning behavior is a key factor that shapes the teaching and learning process, influences academic achievement, and affects the overall classroom environment. This behaviour encompasses the actions, attitudes, and strategies students demonstrate while engaging in academic activities, interacting with educational resources, and navigating the school setting. It reflects a combination of cognitive, emotional, and social elements that influence how students learn, process information, and participate in classroom activities.

Cognitive aspects, as described by Atkinson and Shiffrin (1968) (cited in Spence & Spence; Anderson, 1983), involve the mental processes students use to understand information, solve problems, and acquire new knowledge. These include attention, perception, memory, language skills, and problem-solving abilities. Emotional factors, according to Maslow (1943), Bandura (1997), and Goleman (1995), relate to the feelings and emotional states that impact learning, such as motivation, emotional control, self-confidence, interest, and emotional intelligence. Social factors, as outlined by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Vygotsky (1978), involve the relationships and interactions students have with peers, teachers, and other members of the school community.

It is important to recognize that students' learning behaviours can be either constructive or disruptive. Positive behaviours align with the school's rules and values, such as active participation in class, motivation to learn, self-discipline, teamwork, and persistence when facing challenges. In contrast, negative or disruptive behaviors go against school expectations and may include being distracted (such as texting, chatting, sleeping, or doodling during lessons), interrupting others, making noise, defying rules or instructions, and showing a lack of interest or participation in class.

Supporting this perspective, Bond, Buntins, Bedenlier, Zawacki-Richter, and Kerres (2020) observed that students who are engaged in academic tasks tend to put forth more effort, which fosters positive learning behaviours and leads to better academic results. Zimmerman (as cited in Boekaerts, Pintrich & Zeidner, 2000) also highlighted that self-regulated learners are able to manage their thoughts, motivation, and actions throughout the learning process. Conversely, Hardiyanti and Iskandar (2023) identified eight common disruptive behaviours among students: lack of attention, indifference, cheating, excessive phone use, unnecessary talking, wandering around the classroom, making loud noises, and disturbing others.

Besides the cognitive, emotional, and social processes within learners that influence their behaviour, external factors such as teacher characteristics and the classroom environment also play a significant role in shaping students' learning behavior. Teacher characteristics refer to various attributes related to educators, including their personal and professional qualifications, gender, age, teaching experience, instructional methods, personal traits, teaching effectiveness, adaptability, relationships with students, and emotional support, among others. When exploring the link between teacher traits and students' learning behavior, critical factors like professional qualifications, teaching effectiveness, teacher-student rapport, and adaptability stand out as essential elements in creating productive learning settings.

Research by Skinner and Belmont (2013), cited in Havik and Westergard (2019), found that students tend to show more positive behaviours such as attentiveness and effort in classrooms where teachers demonstrate warmth, provide clear structure, and support autonomy. In contrast, environments characterized by strict or authoritarian approaches were linked to higher levels of student withdrawal and disruptive behavior. Moreover, Havik and Westergard (2019) emphasized that students who perceive their relationships with teachers positively are more likely to be engaged, participate actively, and commit to their learning, underscoring the value of a nurturing classroom atmosphere.

Teacher effectiveness, often reflected in consistent classroom management and the ability to actively involve students, has a direct impact on learning behavior by fostering a well-organized, supportive, and motivating classroom environment (Wentzel, 2017). Additionally, a teacher's adaptability—particularly in responding to

diverse student needs and evolving educational methods—enhances students' engagement and behavior by accommodating different learning styles and encouraging inclusivity (University of San Diego, 2024). This adaptability includes staying current with curriculum changes, instructional resources, teaching techniques, and digital tools, which collectively promote greater student participation. Such an environment encourages positive learning behaviors, including motivation, interest in learning, attentiveness, strong peer relationships, and high self-confidence.

Teacher qualifications, which include both academic credentials and professional certifications, provide educators with the essential knowledge and specialized skills needed for effective teaching (Stronge, 2007). Professional qualifications encompass certifications, training programs, and memberships in educational organizations. Teachers who receive subject-specific training are better positioned to tailor their instructional approaches to the curriculum, making lessons more engaging and impactful (Ventista & Brown, 2023). These qualifications not only improve teachers' competence but also contribute to a structured learning environment that supports student discipline, cooperation, and overall positive behaviour (Caena, 2011). Research indicates that educators with advanced professional qualifications are more capable of delivering curriculum content effectively, adapting to varied learning needs, and employing specialized teaching methods. For example, teachers with expertise in specific subject areas have been shown to improve students' performance on standardized tests by up to 3.5% in their specialized subjects (Sancassani, 2023). The comprehensive knowledge and instructional skills gained through professional qualifications are vital for meeting students' academic requirements and promoting constructive learning behaviours.

Educational qualifications serve as a strong theoretical and practical basis for teaching, playing a significant role in enhancing students' learning outcomes. Research indicates that teachers holding advanced degrees, such as master's or doctoral qualifications, are more effective in cultivating students' critical thinking, communication, and analytical abilities (University of San Diego, 2024). For instance, Sanders and Rivers (2016) reported that students taught by highly qualified educators experienced achievement improvements averaging between 15% and 20%. Further evidence suggests that teachers with solid educational backgrounds tend to be more adaptable professionally, enabling them to incorporate innovative teaching methods and technological tools that address contemporary educational demands (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017). Additionally, Guskey (2002) found that participation in professional development programs enhances teachers' adaptability and overall instructional effectiveness.

Teachers' effectiveness is a crucial attribute that greatly impacts students' academic success. Effective educators foster a positive and engaging classroom atmosphere that supports learning and reduces behavioural problems. Research emphasizes the importance of strong classroom management techniques—such as setting clear expectations and employing student-centered instructional strategies—in creating conducive learning environments (Paramita, Anderson, & Sharma, 2020). These approaches help increase student engagement, motivation, and concentration, all of which are essential for academic achievement (University of San Diego, 2024). Subramaniam (2023) also noted that effective teachers tend to create supportive classroom settings that minimize disruptive behaviours and boost academic performance.

In addition to teacher-related factors, students' characteristics such as gender and age can influence learning behaviour across educational contexts. Shah and Bashi (2022) observed significant behavioural differences between male and female primary school students, influenced by gender, school sector, and class size. Similarly, Kumar and Kumar (2014) and Tariq, Jan, and Khan (2019) found that female students generally outperform males academically and exhibit more reflective learning styles, persistence, and self-regulation. Regarding age, Richardson and King (2013) discovered that older students typically demonstrate higher motivation and engagement but may face challenges related to time management and balancing responsibilities.

The classroom environment is a key determinant in achieving educational objectives, as learning fundamentally depends on the setting in which it occurs. Farhat (2021) argued that well-organized and resource-

rich classrooms encourage student motivation and reduce disruptive behaviours, fostering positive attitudes towards academic work. Physical aspects of the classroom—such as lighting, seating arrangements, and visually stimulating materials—play a vital role in enhancing student concentration and engagement (Cheryan, Ziegler, Plaut, & Meltzoff, 2014). The classroom is the central space where schooling takes place, facilitating peer interaction and socialization, which are critical for educational development (Valiente, Swanson, DeLay, Fraser & Parker, 2020). Stadler-Altmann (2015) emphasized the classroom environment as the foundation for all educational activities. This environment encompasses the shared perceptions of students (and sometimes teachers) regarding physical, social, psychological, and psychosocial conditions within the classroom (Fraser, 2023; Giddings & Fraser, 2017).

The physical environment of the classroom significantly influences effective teaching and learning. Research highlights the importance of factors such as the classroom's structural design, color, furniture, ventilation, lighting, roofing, ceiling, and flooring (Akubue, 2014). Beyond these physical elements, the sociological climate—shaped by teacher-student interactions—greatly affects student morale and motivation, either enhancing or diminishing them (Akubue, 2014). Empirical studies demonstrate that supportive teacher-student relationships can increase student engagement and academic achievement by 25% (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Furthermore, a positive classroom climate can boost motivation by 30% (Rimm-Kaufman, Curby, Grimm, Nathanson & Brock, 2009), while teachers' emotional support contributes to social and emotional development, improving social skills by 20% (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). The psychological classroom environment includes factors such as teaching pace, cohesiveness, distractions, student interests, motivation, anxiety, confusion, and task difficulty, all of which significantly affect learning behavior and outcomes (Haertel & Walberg, 2014). Research has shown that a supportive classroom atmosphere increases student motivation and engagement, leading to better academic performance (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Conversely, distractions like noise and disruptions negatively impact focus, participation, and achievement, creating barriers that hinder effective teaching and learning. Such unfavorable conditions undermine teacher effectiveness and student success, acting as obstacles to academic progress.

Based on these findings, it is evident that teacher characteristics and the classroom environment considerably influence students' learning behavior in secondary schools. Consequently, it is important to conduct research investigating how teacher attributes (such as educational and professional qualifications and teaching effectiveness) and classroom factors (including physical environment, classroom management, and climate) affect students' learning behaviour. This is particularly relevant in Ibadan, Oyo State, where there is limited research on the extent of these influences.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions that guided this study are as follows:

- i. What is the profile of the respondents (teachers and students)?
- ii. What is the nature of students' learning behaviour?
- iii. Is there any significance difference in students' learning behaviour based on gender and age?
- iv. What is the combined effect of teacher characteristics and classroom environment on students' learning behaviour?
- v. What is the relative effect of teacher characteristics and classroom environment on students' learning behaviour?

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey design was used. The population included senior secondary students and teachers in Ibadan, Oyo State. Two LGAs (Ibadan North and Akinyele) were randomly selected from 33 LGAs. Twenty senior secondary schools were randomly chosen from each LGA. Ten S.S.S. 2 students were randomly sampled per school, and the S.S.S. 2 English Language teacher was purposively selected. The sample comprised 400 students and 40 teachers. Two instruments were used for data collection: Teachers' Characteristics and Classroom

Environment Questionnaire (TC2EQ) and Students' Learning Behaviour and Classroom Environment Questionnaire (SLBCEQ). TC2EQ gathered teachers' demographics and perceptions of effectiveness and classroom environment, with 25 items rated on a four-point scale. Reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.79. SLBCEQ collected students' demographics, perceptions of teacher effectiveness and classroom environment, and learning behaviours. It used a similar four-point scale. Reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.77. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential tests (t-tests, ANOVA, multiple regression).

RESULTS

Research question 1: What is the profile of the respondents?

Table 1.1: Teachers' Profile

S/NO	ITEMS	RESPONSE PERCENTAGE (%)	
1	Gender	Male	16 (40%)
		Female	24 (60%)
		Total	40 (100%)
2	Age	35 – 44 years	22 (55%)
		45 – 60 years	18 (45%)
		Total	40 (100%)
3	Year of Teaching Experience	6 – 10years	26 (65%)
		11years and above	14 (35%)
		Total	40 (100%)
4	Academic qualification	Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE)	6 (15%)
		Master Degree in Science/Master degree in Education (M.Sc/M/Edu)	14 (35%)
		Bachelor Degree in Science/Bachelor Degree in Education (B.SC/B.Edu)	19 (47.5%)
		National Certificate in Education (NCE)	1 (2.5%)
		Total	40 (100%)
5	Professional Qualification	Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria (TRC N)	26 (65%)
		Continuing Professional Development	14 (35%)
		Total	40 (100%)

Table 1.1 revealed the profile of the teachers in the study. The results showed that 16 (40%) of the teachers were male while 24 (60%) were female. 22 (55%) of the teachers fall between the age group of 35 -44 years and 18

(45%) of them fall between the age group of 45 – 60 years. 26 (65%) of the teachers had 6 – 10 years teaching experience, while 14 (35%) of them had 11 years and above teaching experience. 6 (15%) of the teachers had a Postgraduate diploma in Education, 14 (35%) % of them had a Masters degree in Science/Masters degree in Education, 19 (47.5%) of them had B.Sc/B.Ed degree while 1 (2.5%) had NCE degree. As regards professional qualification, 26 (65%) of the teachers had a Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria certificate while 14 (35%) of them engages in a continuing professional development programme.

Table 1.2: Students' Profile

S/NO	ITEMS	RESPONSE PERCENTAGE (%)	
1.	Gender	Male	180 (45%)
		Female	220 (55%)
		Total	400 (100%)
2.	Age	9 – 12 years	104 (26%)
		13 – 15 years	192 (48%)
		16 – 18 years	88 (22%)
		19 and above	16 (4%)
		Total	400 (100%)
3.	Fathers' Education	No formal education	8 (2%)
		Primary school Education	12 (3%)
		Secondary school Education	132 (33%)
		Tertiary education	248 (62%)
		Total	400 (100%)
4.	Mothers' education	No formal education	16 (4%)
		Primary school Education	16 (4%)
		Secondary school Education	88 (22%)
		Tertiary education	280 (70%)
		Total	400 (100%)
5.	Fathers' occupation	Civil servant	184 (46%)
		Self-employed	192 (48%)
		Unemployed	24 (6%)
		Total	400 (100%)
6.	Mothers' occupation	Civil servant	144 (36%)
		Self-employed	216 (54%)
		Unemployed	40 (10%)
		Total	400 (100%)

Table 1.2 revealed the profile of the students in the study. 180 (45%) of the students in the study were male while 220 (55%) of them were female. 104 (26%) of the students fall within 9 – 12years, 192 (48%) of them fall within 13 – 15 years, 88 (22%) of them fall within 16 – 18years and 16 (4%) of them fall within 19 years and above. As regards fathers' educational level, 8 (2%) of the students claimed that their fathers had no formal education, 12 (3%) of them said their fathers had primary school education, 132 (33%) claimed that their fathers

had secondary school education while 248 (62%) of them submitted that their fathers had tertiary education. 16 (4%) of the students claimed that their mothers had no formal education, 16 (4%) of them said their mothers had primary school education, 88 (22%) of them claimed that their mothers had secondary school education while 280 (70%) of them submitted that their fathers had tertiary education. 184 (46%) of the students stated that their fathers were civil servants, 192 (48%) claimed that their fathers were self-employed while 24 (6%) of them mentioned that their fathers were unemployed. Lastly, 144 (36%) of the students stated that their mothers were civil servants, 216 (54%) of them claimed that their mothers were self-employed while 40 (10%) of them mentioned that their mothers were unemployed.

Research question 2: What is the nature of students' learning behaviour?

Table 2: Nature of students' learning behaviour

S/NO	ITEMS	A	Of	RT	NT	X (mean)	SD (Standard Deviation)
		% Response	N=100				
1.	I consistently engage in classroom discussions.	216	120	28	36	3.29	0.9459
2.	I ensure that I complete my class assignments and tasks within the given deadlines.	200	136	54	12	3.31	0.8127
3.	I feel motivated to learn in the current classroom environment.	188	140	60	12	3.26	0.8241
4.	I often become distracted during lessons.	94	176	100	32	2.82	0.8805
5.	I cooperate with my classmates during group work activities.	168	152	60	20	3.17	0.8652
6.	I am able to maintain focus on learning tasks without interruptions.	140	148	96	16	3.04	0.8867
7.	I ask questions whenever I find a topic or concept unclear.	220	104	52	24	3.30	0.9156
8.	I take ownership of my learning and academic progress.	168	136	40	56	3.04	1.0436
9.	I pay close attention and follow the teacher's instructions during lessons.	212	124	64	0	3.37	0.7474
10.	I actively seek feedback from my teacher to improve my academic work.	132	112	84	72	2.76	1.1020
11.	Personal problems sometimes affect my concentration during lessons.	112	104	96	88	2.60	1.1191
12.	I participate in group discussions to enhance my understanding.	120	116	92	72	2.91	0.9221
13.	I acquire extra learning materials outside the classroom to support my studies	122	90	94	94	2.65	1.1043
Average mean weight = 3.04							

Note: Keys: A = Always, O = Often, R = Rarely, N = Never. N= Number of respondents; %= Percentage, $\bar{X}$ = Response Mean Score; S.D. = Standard Deviation Score of Responses. Standard Reference Mean = 2.50). Decision rule: positive students' learning behaviour (weighted mean score between 2.50-5.00), Negative students' learning behaviour weighted mean score between 1.00-2.49).

The mean and standard deviation scores presented in Table 2 represent the responses of students about their learning behaviour. The results revealed that the students' learning behaviour is positive with a weighted average

of 3.04. For the weighted mean score to meet the standard preference score the students' responses to the learning behaviour score must range between 2.50 and 5.00 for high students' learning behaviour. Hence, the results showed that the students had positive learning behaviour.

A further breakdown of results in Table 4 indicates that many of the students actively participate in classroom discussions. (Mean = 3.29, SD = 0.9459), many of them completed their classwork and assignments on time (Mean = 3.31, SD = 0.8127), some of them get distracted during lessons (Mean = 2.82, SD = 0.8805), some of the students claimed that they seek feedback from their teacher to improve my academic performance (Mean = 2.76, SD = 1.1020). Also, some of them mentioned that they get additional learning materials outside the classroom (Mean = 2.65, SD = 1.1043).

Research question 3: Is there any significance difference in students' learning behaviour based on gender and age?

Table 3a: Significance difference between male and female students' learning behaviour

Variables	Mean	SD	N	Mean differ	T	Sig.	Remark
Male learning behaviour	40.62	4.721	180	2.004	1.883	.063	Not Sig.
Female learning behaviour	38.62	5.720	220				

Table 3a above showed that learning behaviour of male students is slightly higher with mean score of 40.62 and standard deviation of 4.721 whereas female students have a mean score of 38.62 and standard deviation of 5.720 with ($t = 1.883$, $p > 0.05$). This is an indication though there is a slight difference in the mean score of male and female learning behaviour, the difference observed is not significant. This implies that there is no significant difference between male and female students' learning behaviour.

Table 3b: Significance difference in students' learning behaviour based on age

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	186.568	3	62.189	2.244	.088
Within Groups	2660.392	396	27.712		
Total	2846.960	399			

Table 3b showed that learning behaviour of the students does not differ based on age ($F_{(396)} = 2.244$, $p > 0.05$). This is an indication though there is a slight difference in the mean score of students' behaviour in the various age groups; the difference observed is not significant. This implies that there is no significant difference in the learning behaviour of the students in the various age groups.

Research question 4: What is the combined effect of teacher characteristics and classroom environment on students' learning behaviour?

Table 4a: Combined Effect of Teacher characteristics and classroom environment on students' learning behaviour

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.981 ^a	.962	.924	2.491

Table 4b: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	313.594	2	156.797	25.277	.038 ^b
	Residual	12.406	37	6.203		
	Total	326.000	39			

Tables 4a and 4b showed the model summary and regression ANOVA respectively. The multiple regression correlation coefficient (R) shows a positive high relationship between predictor variables: teachers' characteristics and classroom environment on students' learning behaviour in Ibadan as shown in Table 4.4a is 0.981, the multiple R² is 0.962 which is 96.2% and the Adjusted R² value is 0.924 which is 92.4%. This means that the variation in students' learning behaviour accounted for by the predictor variables: teacher characteristics and classroom environment is approximately 92.4% and it is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ level. Furthermore, indicated in Table 4.4b is the analysis of the variance of the multiple regression data. This produced an F- ratio of $F_{(37)} = 25.277$ and was found to be significant at 0.05 Alpha level. This implies that the predictor variables (teachers' characteristics and classroom environment) do jointly predict or have an effect on the dependent variable (students' learning behaviour).

Research question 5: What is the relative effect of teachers' characteristics and classroom environment on students' learning behaviour?

Table 5: Relative effect of teacher characteristics and classroom environment on students' learning behaviour

Coefficients ^a					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T
1	(Constant)	-136.896	30.901		-4.430
	Teacher' characteristics	-.521	.777	-.120	-.671
	Classroom environment	5.677	.962	1.052	5.899

Table 5 showed the contribution of each of the predictor variables to the prediction of students' learning behaviour in Ibadan. Teachers' characteristics $\beta = -.120$; $t_{(36)} = -.671$; $p > 0.05$) did not contribute significantly to the prediction model for students' learning behaviour at 0.05 level. On the other hand, classroom environment $\beta = 1.052$; $t_{(36)} = 5.899$ $p < 0.05$) did contribute to the prediction of students' learning behaviour?

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study highlight the role of teachers' characteristics and the classroom environment as key predictors of students' learning behaviour in Ibadan. This section summarizes the main results and discusses their implications for student learning.

The results indicated that students generally exhibit positive learning behaviours. Specifically, many students actively engaged in classroom discussions, completed assignments punctually, occasionally experienced distractions during lessons, and sought feedback from teachers to improve their academic performance. Some

students also reported accessing additional learning materials outside the classroom. These outcomes align with Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), who emphasized that student engagement spans behavioural, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. Their research also showed that students consistently engaged in behaviours such as attending classes, participating actively, and completing assignments tend to achieve higher academic success.

Previous studies by Kumar and Kumar (2014) and Tariq, Jan, and Khan (2019) found that female students often outperform males academically and demonstrate more reflective and positive learning behaviours, including persistence and self-regulation. Regarding age-related differences, Richardson and King (2013) observed that older students generally exhibit greater motivation and engagement but may struggle with time management and balancing responsibilities.

However, this study found no significant difference in learning behaviour between male and female students, which contrasts with Shah and Bashi's (2022) findings of gender-based behavioural differences in primary schools. Similarly, no significant differences were observed across different age groups, suggesting that students, regardless of gender or age, may share similar family backgrounds, motivations, parental involvement, and perceptions of teacher-student relationships. This contradicts Richardson and King's (2013) observation that older students tend to be more motivated and engaged than younger peers.

Additionally, the study revealed a strong positive correlation between teachers' characteristics and classroom environment as predictors of students' learning behaviour. Both factors jointly influenced students' learning behaviour in Ibadan. These findings support Hamre and Pianta's (2001) assertion that teacher characteristics directly affect students' behavioural and academic outcomes, with emotionally supportive teachers fostering greater student engagement, motivation, and resilience. Their research also indicated that students who perceive their teachers as caring are more connected to the learning process, which positively impacts motivation and academic behaviours.

Interestingly, teachers' characteristics alone did not significantly predict students' learning behaviour at the 0.05 significance level. This contrasts with Hoy and Woolfolk's (1993) findings, which linked teacher personality traits—such as enthusiasm, empathy, and organization—to student motivation and engagement. It also differs from Sancassani's (2023) study showing that teachers with subject-specific qualifications improve student performance on standardized tests by up to 3.5%. The lack of significant impact from teachers' demographic and professional characteristics in this study suggests that other factors—such as parental involvement, intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and positive teacher-student relationships—may play a more substantial role in shaping students' learning behaviour. This implies that students' positive learning behaviours can persist regardless of teachers' gender, age, experience, or qualifications.

Moreover, the classroom environment was found to significantly predict students' learning behaviour. This aligns with Emmer and Hickman's (1991) findings that well-organized classrooms reduce distractions and increase students' focus on learning tasks. Their study noted a 25% increase in student engagement time in organized classrooms, which supports steady academic progress. Effective classroom organization also promotes a calm and predictable atmosphere, reducing anxiety and enhancing concentration. The results also corroborated Ngware, Ciera, Musyoka, and Oketch (2013) discovery that students sitting in the front rows scored between 5% and 27% higher in learning outcomes compared to those seated further away from the chalkboard. This indicates that arranging seating strategically can enhance learning, particularly for students who learn at a slower pace. Consequently, classroom furniture and layout should be designed to promote collaborative learning and active teaching approaches, thereby increasing student participation and facilitating knowledge development.

The study also recommends that governments and school administrators invest in programs that train teachers to create psychologically supportive classroom environments. Collaboration among school leaders, teachers, parents, and NGOs is essential to develop classroom settings that reflect local needs and priorities.

CONCLUSION

When examining students' learning behaviour in relation to teacher characteristics and the classroom environment, it was found that factors such as teachers' gender, age, teaching experience, and educational and professional qualifications did not significantly predict students' learning behaviour. However, the classroom environment stood out as a key influence. The positive impact of a well-organized and supportive classroom setting highlights the critical role of effective classroom management techniques in shaping student behaviour. Although individual teacher characteristics showed limited direct effect, their combined influence with the classroom environment was positively associated with students' learning behaviour. These findings emphasize the importance of policies and initiatives aimed at enhancing classroom conditions and equipping teachers with the skills and resources needed for successful classroom management. In summary, improving the classroom environment is essential for promoting more positive learning behaviours among students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are suggested to enhance students' learning behavior:

1. School authorities should focus on improving classroom conditions by ensuring adequate facilities, proper ventilation, and suitable seating arrangements. Maintaining well-organized, distraction-free classrooms will foster a learning environment that encourages students' commitment and academic achievement.
2. Ongoing professional development programs should be provided to teachers by school administrators, aimed at equipping them with effective classroom management skills and flexible teaching approaches. Training should emphasize the creation of emotionally supportive and well-structured learning spaces that cater to all students regardless of their gender or age.
3. School leadership should promote the development of strong, supportive teacher-student relationships across all genders and age groups. Offering emotional support and nurturing a caring classroom climate can boost students' motivation, resilience, and active participation in learning.
4. Educational policymakers should implement strategies to optimize seating arrangements to improve learning outcomes, particularly for slower learners. Positioning students closer to instructional focal points, such as the chalkboard, can enhance their engagement and academic performance.
5. Even though teacher characteristics were not significant predictors of learning behavior in this research, educational administrators should maintain regular teacher evaluations and feedback systems. These may include peer observations, student feedback, and performance reviews to uphold high teaching standards.
6. Government bodies and school management should allocate adequate funding to address infrastructural challenges within schools. Investments in modern teaching tools, learning resources, and classroom facilities will substantially improve the overall educational environment.

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