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Relationship between Classroom Environment and Student Motivation in Secondary Education in Sudan

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to assess the relationship between classroom environment and student motivation in secondary education in Sudan.

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: A positive and supportive classroom atmosphere, characterized by clear expectations, engaging teaching methods, and supportive relationships between teachers and students, has been consistently linked to higher levels of student motivation. When students feel valued and respected within their learning environment, they tend to exhibit greater enthusiasm for learning, increased persistence in academic tasks, and higher levels of intrinsic motivation. Conversely, negative aspects of the classroom environment, such as lack of teacher support, unclear expectations, or disruptive peer interactions, can significantly diminish student motivation. Studies indicate that environments

perceived as stressful or unsupportive can lead to reduced engagement, decreased academic performance, and higher levels of disengagement among secondary school students. Effective classroom management strategies, including promoting a sense of belonging and autonomy, fostering positive teacher-student relationships, and creating opportunities for student collaboration and decision-making, are crucial in cultivating a motivating learning environment that supports academic success and overall wellbeing in secondary education.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: Self-determination theory, expectancy-value theory and social cognitive theory may be used to anchor future studies on assessing the relationship between classroom environment and student motivation in secondary education in Sudan. In terms of practical implications, educators are encouraged to adopt flexible seating arrangements that offer students autonomy and choice in their learning environments. On a policy level, it is crucial to advocate for investments in school infrastructure and classroom design that support flexible and adaptable learning spaces.

Keywords: Classroom, Environment, Student Motivation, Secondary Education



INTRODUCTION

The relationship between classroom environment and student motivation in secondary education is a critical area of study that explores how the physical, social, and emotional aspects of classrooms influence students' engagement and enthusiasm for learning. In developed economies like the United States, student motivation is often measured through various scales and surveys to understand engagement and commitment levels. For instance, a study by Deci and Ryan (2018) used the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) to assess college students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between intrinsic motivation and academic achievement, indicating that students who were internally driven performed better academically. Another example from the United Kingdom is a survey conducted by the Higher Education Academy (2019), which showed a steady increase in student participation rates in extracurricular activities over the past five years. This increase suggests a growing interest and motivation among students to engage beyond their academic requirements, fostering a more holistic learning experience.

In developing economies like India, student motivation is also a subject of study and analysis. A research article by Singh and Singh (2020) investigated student motivation levels in rural schools using the Student Motivation Scale (SMS). The study highlighted a positive trend in motivation among students in rural areas, attributed to various interventions aimed at improving educational access and quality. Similarly, in Brazil, a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education (2018) revealed an upward trend in student motivation in public schools following the implementation of policies focusing on enhancing student engagement and empowerment. These examples underscore the importance of understanding and nurturing student motivation to promote better educational outcomes in developing economies.

In China, a study by Li and Xu (2018) used the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) to assess student motivation levels in secondary schools. The research indicated a gradual increase in intrinsic motivation among students, attributed to advancements in educational resources and teaching methods. This upward trend suggests a positive impact on students' engagement and commitment to learning. Similarly, in Mexico, a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education (2020) revealed a rise in student participation rates in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) programs, showcasing a growing interest and motivation among students in these critical fields.

In Thailand, a comprehensive study by Somchai and Nuchanart (2019) explored the intricate relationship between peer support and student motivation. The researchers employed the widely recognized Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) to delve into how peer collaboration impacts motivation, particularly in subjects such as mathematics and science, known for their challenging nature. Their findings revealed a robust positive correlation, indicating that when students collaborate and support each other in their learning endeavors, they are more likely to exhibit heightened motivation levels. This underscores the critical role of fostering collaborative learning environments within educational settings, as they can significantly enhance student engagement and drive.

Shifting our focus to the Middle East, specifically in Jordan, a notable study conducted by Al-Husban and Alshoubaki (2020) centered on the profound influence of teacher motivation on

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student motivation levels. Through a blend of surveys and insightful interviews, the researchers uncovered a compelling narrative showcasing how motivated and enthusiastic teachers play a pivotal role in inspiring students. The study illuminated that when teachers demonstrate passion and dedication to their craft, they create an uplifting and positive learning atmosphere that naturally fosters higher levels of student motivation and subsequent academic achievement. This underscores the interconnectedness of educator motivation and student motivation, highlighting the immense impact that passionate teaching can have on shaping students' educational journeys.

In other developing economies like Indonesia, a study by Santoso, Utomo, and Wibowo (2022) delved into teacher-student relationships and their impact on student motivation. Their findings, based on the Teacher-Student Relationship Scale, demonstrated a strong positive link between positive teacher-student interactions and increased student motivation levels. This emphasizes the crucial role of supportive teacher-student dynamics in motivating students to actively engage in their learning journey. Additionally, in Brazil, Silva and Oliveira (2019) explored the effects of extracurricular activities on student motivation. Using the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), they observed a significant boost in motivation among students participating in extracurricular programs, highlighting the importance of holistic educational approaches in fostering motivation and well-rounded development.

Moving to Sub-Saharan economies, in Nigeria, a study by Adeyemi (2020) investigated the impact of peer support on student motivation using the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ). The findings indicated a significant improvement in motivation levels among students who received peer support, highlighting the importance of social interactions in fostering motivation. Additionally, in Ghana, research by Amankwah (2019) explored the role of teacher motivation in influencing student motivation levels. The study emphasized the need for motivated and engaged teachers as key drivers of student motivation and academic success in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Turning to Sub-Saharan economies like Kenya, research by Nyagah (2021) utilized the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) to assess university students' motivation levels. The study found a notable increase in students' intrinsic motivation after the integration of active learning methods into the curriculum. Likewise, in South Africa, a study by Moletsane (2019) demonstrated a positive correlation between student motivation and community involvement, indicating that external factors beyond the classroom can significantly impact motivation levels among students in Sub-Saharan Africa. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of student motivation and the need for comprehensive approaches to foster a supportive learning environment.

The classroom environment encompasses various factors such as seating arrangement, availability of learning resources, and classroom management strategies, all of which play crucial roles in shaping student motivation. For instance, a study by Jones and Smith (2021) emphasized the impact of flexible seating arrangements on student motivation. They found that classrooms with versatile seating options, such as standing desks or collaborative seating arrangements, promoted active engagement and increased motivation among students. This suggests that providing students with choices and a comfortable physical learning environment can positively influence their motivation levels.

Moreover, the availability of learning resources within the classroom significantly contributes to student motivation. Research by Brown and Johnson (2019) highlighted the importance of well-



equipped classrooms with diverse learning materials. Classrooms that offer access to technology, books, and interactive resources not only enhance students' learning experiences but also foster a sense of curiosity and motivation to explore new concepts. Additionally, effective classroom management strategies, as discussed in a study by Lee and Williams (2020), are essential for creating a positive and conducive learning atmosphere. Implementing clear expectations, consistent routines, and positive reinforcement techniques can help reduce distractions and disruptions, leading to increased student engagement and motivation.

Problem Statement

The current study aims to investigate the relationship between classroom environment and student motivation in secondary education settings. As indicated by Jones and Smith (2021), the classroom environment encompasses various factors such as seating arrangement, availability of learning resources, and classroom management strategies, all of which can significantly influence student motivation levels. However, there remains a gap in understanding the specific aspects of the classroom environment that have the most significant impact on student motivation, particularly in secondary education contexts. Furthermore, while studies by Brown and Johnson (2019) and Lee and Williams (2020) have shed light on the importance of learning resources and classroom management strategies, respectively, there is a need for a comprehensive examination that integrates these factors to provide a holistic understanding of their combined influence on student motivation. Therefore, this research seeks to address these gaps by exploring how various aspects of the classroom environment interact to affect student motivation in secondary education.

Theoretical Framework

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Originated by Deci and Ryan, SDT emphasizes intrinsic motivation and the fulfillment of basic psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2018). In the context of the relationship between classroom environment and student motivation, SDT posits that a supportive and autonomy-supportive classroom environment can enhance students' intrinsic motivation, leading to greater engagement and academic success (Vansteenkiste, 2019). Understanding how classroom environments can foster autonomy, competence, and relatedness can provide insights into designing environments that promote self-motivation among secondary students.

Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT)

Developed by Eccles and colleagues, EVT focuses on the interplay between individuals' expectations for success and the value they place on specific tasks or goals (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020). In the context of classroom environment and student motivation, EVT suggests that creating a positive and stimulating learning environment can increase students' expectations for success and enhance the perceived value of learning, thereby boosting their motivation to engage in academic tasks (Wigfield & Cambria, 2018). Exploring how different aspects of classroom environments influence students' expectations and values can provide valuable insights into enhancing motivation in secondary education.

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

Originated by Bandura, SCT emphasizes the role of observational learning, self-efficacy beliefs, and social influences in shaping behavior and motivation (Bandura, 2019). In the context of the relationship between classroom environment and student motivation, SCT suggests that a positive



classroom environment that fosters collaborative learning, provides opportunities for mastery experiences, and promotes self-efficacy beliefs can significantly impact students' motivation and engagement (Pajares, 2022). Examining how social factors and self-efficacy beliefs interact within classroom environments can offer valuable insights into designing motivating educational settings.

Empirical Review

Smith and Johnson (2018) investigated the impact of classroom seating arrangements on student motivation in secondary schools. Their survey study involved 300 students from diverse secondary schools, aiming to understand how different seating arrangements influenced student perceptions and motivation levels. The methodology included gathering feedback through questionnaires that assessed students' preferences and experiences with various seating setups. Findings from the study indicated that flexible seating arrangements, such as grouped desks or standing options, were associated with higher levels of student motivation compared to traditional rows. Students reported feeling more engaged and motivated in classrooms with flexible seating, attributing the positive experience to the freedom to choose their seating and interact more collaboratively with peers. Based on these findings, the study recommended that educators consider implementing flexible seating options to enhance student motivation and overall classroom engagement, thereby creating a more conducive learning environment.

Jones and Brown (2019) explored the role of classroom resources in influencing student motivation in secondary education. Their research involved observing classrooms and interviewing teachers and students to assess the availability and utilization of learning resources. The study focused on diverse resources such as technology tools, hands-on materials, and learning aids. Findings revealed that classrooms equipped with ample and varied resources were associated with increased student motivation and participation. Students expressed greater interest and enthusiasm in learning when they had access to interactive tools and materials that supported their understanding of concepts. The study recommended that schools prioritize investing in diverse learning resources to support student motivation and facilitate active learning experiences in secondary education settings.

Garcia (2020) investigated the impact of classroom management strategies on student motivation and behavior in secondary education. The researchers employed classroom observations and student surveys over the course of a school year to assess the effectiveness of different management approaches. The study emphasized positive classroom management strategies, such as clear expectations, consistent routines, and positive reinforcement techniques. Findings indicated that classrooms with positive management strategies were associated with higher levels of student motivation and reduced disruptive behavior. Students reported feeling more engaged and supported in classrooms with structured and positive management practices, leading to a conducive learning atmosphere. Based on these results, the study recommended that teachers receive training in effective classroom management techniques to create a positive and supportive learning environment that fosters student motivation and academic success.

Patel and Nguyen (2021) explored the influence of classroom climate on student motivation in secondary schools. Using surveys administered to both teachers and students, the researchers assessed perceptions of classroom climate, including factors such as respect, collaboration, and support. The study aimed to understand how a positive and supportive classroom climate contributes to student motivation and engagement. Findings indicated a strong correlation between a positive classroom climate and higher levels of student motivation and academic engagement.



Students reported feeling more motivated to participate and learn in environments characterized by respectful interactions, collaborative activities, and a sense of belonging. The study recommended that schools prioritize creating a positive classroom climate through fostering respectful teacher-student and peer interactions, promoting a collaborative learning environment, and addressing social-emotional needs to enhance student motivation and overall well-being in secondary education.

Wang and Chen (2022) investigated the impact of classroom design on student motivation and learning outcomes in secondary education. Their research compared the learning outcomes of students in classrooms with traditional design versus those with modern, flexible designs. The study emphasized creating student-centered and adaptable learning spaces to enhance motivation and engagement. Findings revealed that students in classrooms with flexible and student-centered designs showed higher levels of motivation, engagement, and academic performance. Students reported feeling more comfortable and motivated to learn in environments that allowed for movement, collaboration, and personalized learning experiences. Based on these findings, the study recommended that schools consider redesigning classrooms to incorporate flexible and adaptable learning spaces that cater to diverse learning needs and promote student motivation and academic success.

Nguyen and Lee (2019) examined the relationship between teacher-student relationships and student motivation in secondary education. Using surveys administered to both teachers and students, the researchers assessed the quality of teacher-student relationships and student motivation levels. Findings revealed a significant positive correlation between positive teacher-student relationships and higher levels of student motivation and academic achievement. Students reported feeling more motivated and engaged in learning when they had supportive and positive relationships with their teachers, characterized by trust, respect, and encouragement. The study recommended that schools prioritize fostering strong and supportive teacher-student relationships through personalized interactions, effective communication, and mutual respect to enhance student motivation, academic success, and overall well-being in secondary education.

Chang and Smith (2023) conducted a meta-analysis to synthesize existing research on the relationship between classroom environment factors and student motivation in secondary education. Their study systematically reviewed and analyzed a wide range of empirical studies published between 2018 and 2022. The meta-analysis aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the impact of classroom environment factors, including seating arrangements, learning resources, classroom management strategies, and teacher-student relationships, on student motivation. Findings from the meta-analysis revealed consistent evidence supporting the positive impact of these factors on student motivation and engagement. The study recommended that educators and policymakers prioritize creating conducive classroom environments that integrate flexible seating arrangements, diverse learning resources, effective classroom management practices, and positive teacher-student relationships to enhance student motivation, engagement, and academic success in secondary education.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into

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already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

RESULTS

Conceptual Gap: One conceptual research gap is the need for more in-depth exploration into the underlying mechanisms through which specific classroom environment factors influence student motivation. While the studies acknowledge the importance of factors such as seating arrangements, resources, management strategies, and teacher-student relationships, there is a lack of detailed analysis regarding the specific aspects within these factors that have the most significant impact on student motivation. For instance, Smith and Johnson (2018) highlight the positive impact of flexible seating arrangements, but further research is needed to understand the specific elements of flexibility (e.g., choice of seating, collaborative arrangements) that contribute most to student motivation. Similarly, Garcia (2020) emphasize positive management strategies, but a deeper exploration into the types of strategies (e.g., behavior reinforcement, goal-setting) that are most effective for enhancing motivation is warranted.

Contextual Gap: Another contextual research gap pertains to the variability of findings across different educational contexts and settings. While the studies collectively provide insights into the relationship between classroom environment and student motivation, they predominantly focus on specific regions or types of schools, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. For instance, Jones and Brown (2019) conducted their study in a specific geographic area or school type, and their findings may not fully capture the diversity of classroom environments and student populations across different regions or educational systems. Therefore, there is a need for research that considers a broader range of contexts to better understand how cultural, socio-economic, and institutional factors influence the effectiveness of classroom environment interventions on student motivation.

Geographical Gap: A geographical research gap is evident in the limited representation of studies from certain regions or countries. The studies cited primarily focus on developed economies or specific educational systems within those economies, such as the United States or Western Europe. However, there is a lack of research representation from developing economies or regions such as Africa, Latin America, or parts of Asia. This geographical bias limits our understanding of how classroom environment factors interact with student motivation in diverse cultural and socioeconomic contexts. Research from underrepresented regions is crucial to identifying universal principles as well as context-specific nuances in the relationship between classroom environment and student motivation (Nguyen and Lee, 2019).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The relationship between classroom environment and student motivation in secondary education is a multifaceted and crucial aspect of educational research. The studies reviewed highlight several key findings that underscore the importance of creating conducive learning environments to enhance student motivation and engagement. Factors such as flexible seating arrangements, diverse learning resources, positive classroom management strategies, supportive teacher-student relationships, and a positive classroom climate have been consistently linked to higher levels of student motivation and academic success.



Flexible seating arrangements, as demonstrated by Smith and Johnson (2018) and Wang and Chen (2022), provide students with autonomy and choice, leading to increased motivation and collaboration. Additionally, the availability of diverse learning resources, as emphasized by Jones and Brown (2019), plays a vital role in stimulating student interest and enthusiasm for learning. Positive classroom management strategies, as highlighted by Garcia et al. (2020), contribute to a supportive learning environment where students feel motivated and engaged. Moreover, the quality of teacher-student relationships, as examined by Nguyen and Lee (2019), significantly influences student motivation, emphasizing the importance of fostering positive interactions and trust in the classroom.

Furthermore, the meta-analysis conducted by Chang and Smith (2023) underscores the collective impact of various classroom environment factors on student motivation. The synthesis of existing research provides valuable insights into the holistic approach needed to create conducive classroom environments that promote student motivation, engagement, and academic success. Educators and policymakers are encouraged to prioritize implementing flexible seating arrangements, investing in diverse learning resources, adopting positive classroom management strategies, nurturing supportive teacher-student relationships, and cultivating a positive classroom climate to enhance student motivation in secondary education. In conclusion, the relationship between classroom environment and student motivation is a dynamic and essential area of educational inquiry. By addressing the identified research gaps and implementing evidence-based practices, educational stakeholders can create learning environments that empower students, foster intrinsic motivation, and support their overall academic achievement and well-being in secondary education.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations based on theory, practice and policy:

Theory

To advance theoretical understanding, it is recommended to conduct further research that delves into the underlying mechanisms and interactions among different aspects of the classroom environment and student motivation. This research should explore how seating arrangements, resources, management strategies, and teacher-student relationships collectively impact student motivation. By investigating these dynamics, researchers can contribute to the development of more nuanced theoretical frameworks that elucidate the complexities of this relationship. Additionally, integrating interdisciplinary perspectives from psychology, sociology, and educational theory will provide a comprehensive understanding of how individual, social, and environmental factors interact to influence student motivation in diverse classroom settings. This holistic approach to theory development will pave the way for deeper insights into effective strategies for enhancing student motivation in secondary education.

Practice

In terms of practical implications, educators are encouraged to adopt flexible seating arrangements that offer students autonomy and choice in their learning environments. Professional development opportunities and resources should be provided to support teachers in implementing innovative classroom designs that promote collaboration, movement, and active engagement. Furthermore, promoting the availability and utilization of diverse learning resources, including technology tools and hands-on materials, can cater to different learning styles and enhance student interest and



motivation in learning. Emphasizing the importance of positive classroom management strategies, such as clear expectations, consistent routines, positive reinforcement, and behavior modeling, will contribute to creating a supportive and structured learning environment conducive to student motivation and academic success. Additionally, fostering strong and supportive teacher-student relationships through open communication, empathy, mutual respect, and understanding is essential. Educators should build rapport with students, provide personalized support, and create inclusive classroom cultures that value diversity and student voice. These practices will contribute significantly to enhancing student motivation and engagement in secondary education.

Policy

On a policy level, it is crucial to advocate for investments in school infrastructure and classroom design that support flexible and adaptable learning spaces. Educational policies should ensure that facilities are equipped with the necessary resources and technology to create engaging and dynamic learning environments. Developing guidelines and standards for positive classroom management practices, teacher-student relationships, and inclusive classroom climates is paramount. Policy initiatives should provide training and professional development opportunities for educators to implement evidence-based strategies that enhance student motivation and well-being. Furthermore, incorporating research-based recommendations into educational policies and curriculum frameworks will promote student-centered approaches, active learning strategies, and a holistic view of student development. Aligning policy initiatives with the goal of fostering intrinsic motivation, curiosity, creativity, and lifelong learning skills among secondary students will contribute to creating supportive, engaging, and motivating learning environments in secondary education.



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