Availability and Utilisation of Informal School Clubs Supporting the Teaching and Learning of English Language in Secondary Schools in Irewole Local Government Area, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the availability and utilisation of informal school clubs supporting the teaching and learning of English in Irewole Local Government area of Osun state. The survey research design was adopted. A total of 200 students, 15 teachers, purposively selected from 5 schools because the study required participants who had direct knowledge of and experience with the informal school clubs under investigation were used for this research. The instruments used were: Inventory of Available Informal School Clubs, (r=0.75) and Utilisation of Informal School Clubs Scale(r=0.78).The data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation. The findings revealed that informal school clubs available were Literary and Debating society, Press clubs, Drama and Theatre club.The teachers always utilised these clubs in teaching English with a weighted mean of 3.46 as against the threshold of 2.50. Based on the findings, the study recommended that school administrators should establish and strengthen relevant informal school clubs, English language teachers should collaborate with club coordinators to organise language-based activities regularly, and education stakeholders should provide adequate support and resources to enhance the effective utilisation of informal school clubs in secondary schools.

Keywords: Informal School clubs, Availability, Utilisation, English Language teaching and learning

Introduction

The teaching and learning of English Language in Nigeria have long been characterised by a heavy reliance on traditional, teacher-centred classroom practices. These methods typically prioritise grammar translation, note-taking, teacher explanation, and the memorisation of rules, while giving limited room for active learner participation. Muhammad, Ya'u, Aliyu and Hassan (2018) observe that English language instruction across Nigerian schools still follows a predominantly formal and structural approach, where the teacher is the central source of knowledge and students serve mainly as passive recipients. This rigid, formalised pattern creates an environment in which students rarely engage in meaningful communicative use of the English Language.

Furthermore, research indicates that the structure of the Nigerian classroom itself reinforces this overdependence on traditional methods. Murana (2021) found out that public secondary schools often suffer from limited instructional time, large class sizes, and inadequate resources, all of which push towards teacher-centred approaches. Under such circumstances, interactive strategies such as group discussion, role play, debates, or project-based learning are seldom implemented. As a result, the classroom becomes dominated by chalk-and-talk practices that privilege correctness over communication, thereby limiting linguistic creativity and fluency.

In addition, numerous scholars argue that traditional methods alone cannot meet the communicative demands of contemporary language learning. Obera, Ugboja and Sule (2023) highlight that the 21st century English Language classroom requires collaborative, technology-enhanced and learner-centred activities. Yet, many Nigerian classrooms still operate within outdated pedagogies that emphasise grammatical knowledge at the expense of communicative competence. Recent international studies also confirm the limitations of traditional approaches. Nazarova (2024) points out that conventional instructional methods provide a structured yet extremely restricted learning environment. While they support foundational grammar learning, they do little to encourage confidence, fluency or spontaneous communication which are skills that flourish better in informal, interactive environments. Students taught solely through traditional methods often struggle to apply the English Language in real-life contexts, especially in oral communication, group tasks and creative writing.

Research carried out by Adeyiga, Ngcobo and Mhlongo (2025) discovered that most teachers in Ogun state teach reading comprehension through explanation, translation and teacher questioning without integrating discussion, peer activity or reading clubs. This method limits students' exposure to extensive reading, critical analysis and expressive skills. Formal classroom instruction alone cannot provide the communicative, interactive, and experiential learning opportunities necessary for effective English language acquisition.

The constraints of teaching English Language relying on formal classroom instruction such as limited student talk time, minimal

collaborative activities, overemphasis on grammar, restricted exposure to authentic language development, suggest that classroom instruction alone may not sufficiently meet learners' language needs, thereby necessitating complementary language-learning opportunities beyond the formal classroom.

One promising avenue for supporting English language development is the use of Informal School Clubs. Teaching and learning activities of the school have been mainly classified into curricular and co-curricular activities. Curricular activities are those teaching and learning activities that are official or formal, they are referred to as the core of the learning a child undergoes in school as it is backed up by the document called Curriculum and is reflected on the school's time table.

Co-curricular activities on the other hand are activities sponsored or recognised by a school which are not part of the academic curriculum but are used to supplement the curriculum and are usually carried-out outside the classroom to develop the personality of the child. They are activities that act as a way for students to experience what they are learning in the classroom in real-life context. Co-curricular activities include Informal School Club activities such as literary and debating club, press club, readers club, drama club, music club, cultural dance club, jet club, young farmers club that are used to supplement the curriculum and are usually carried out outside the classroom to develop the proficiency of the learner in the English Language. (Akintola T.L 2022).

Informal School Clubs are voluntary extracurricular groups where students gather to participate in activities based on shared interests. The importance of extracurricular activities is backed by the communicative approach in which English as Foreign Language or Second Language learners can develop their communicative, grammatical, and sociolinguistic competencies. These can be in the form of giving speeches, participating in debates, and other social activities. (Yildiz, 2016). The development of school clubs has been a means of broadening the scope of school activities beyond the confines of the curriculum, with a consequent enlargement of the contribution the school makes toward the adjustment of the individual to society. At least one reason, and an important one, for the ready acceptance of club work in the high schools is the fact that changes in the school curriculum to meet new conditions in education are not readily accomplished. A great deal of inertia exists in the curriculum program. Because of this, new subjects and also old subjects presented from a new angle or by a new procedure, are often brought into the school as extra curriculum activities, that is, activities outside of or beyond the bounds and compass of the school curriculum. Into this scheme, the school club fits well. The subject clubs represent a new method of attack or a different emphasis or both for a curriculum subject, which has not been accepted as a curriculum practice. Other clubs represent functional activities of a practical type in subjects not included in the curriculum of the school in which they are organised. The amount and variety of work now carried on by schools as extra curriculum activities, including school clubs, represents so large a development that the question has been raised as to whether or not the extras may not come to make a major contribution to the aims of secondary education.

In club activities, students can collaborate on collective projects to achieve a common goal. Secondly, clubs enable students to enhance verbal communication, non-verbal communication, and para-verbal communication skills. Tasks that foster skills like asking and answering questions, performing plays and role-plays, listening actively, and paying attention to eye contact and body language. Also, students deal with different challenges and real-life situations that they need to overcome in school clubs' activities and tasks.

These activities teach students how to solve problems creatively and choose the best solutions to address challenges. Moreover, clubs nurture in students the ability to manage their time wisely to work and accomplish projects, and learn how to set priorities. Finally, yet importantly, leadership skills can be improved through extracurricular activities and extramural learning tasks. Students learn in clubs how to convince others and learn how to be leaders or followers depending on each situation (Holmes, 2014)

Students need to be involved in other entertaining activities and not be confined to the small world of the classroom by participating in school club tasks. According to Fredricks (2011), learners who frequently take part in school club activities tend to get higher grades and scores in written and oral performances. Lipscomb (2007) argues that involvement in school club activities is associated with a 2% rise in test scores in math and science.

Additionally, compared to non-participants, students who participate in activities have a 10% higher expectation of earning a college degree (Lipscomb, 2007). As a result, it is important to motivate students to participate in these kinds of activities during their academic path.

While engaging in extracurricular activities, students improve skills that help them

succeed academically. Firstly, students learn how to follow directions by playing structured games. They get the ability to pay attention to instructions and follow them to achieve an objective. Secondly, students learn the value of motivation and perseverance through structured activities (Fredricks, 2011). They are aware that attaining goals frequently requires effort and concentration. Also, students gain knowledge of problem solving techniques and goal setting (Wormington *et al.*, 2012). The competencies students develop from participating in school club activities, such as following directions, perseverance, drive, goal-setting, and problem-solving, positively impact their academic performance. In general, students' academic achievement is impacted differently according to the type of club activity they participate in. For example, students who are involved in sports clubs typically score higher in math and science (Lipscomb, 2007) and literacy (Shulruf *et al.*, 2007). Thus, teachers can help learners realise their academic aims by having a better understanding of how engagement in a variety of activities affects their academic growth.

In addition to academic performance, school clubs enhance students' personality development.

Despite the importance of Informal School Clubs in teaching and learning, in some schools, they are being used for recreation rather than being used as platform for teaching and learning English Language. According to a research carried out by Pence and Diamond (2015), it was found out that school clubs can become purely recreational if not structured towards academic achievement; clubs become just leisure time rather than learning spaces. Research on extracurricular activities shows that when such programmes are not academically structured, they become social outlets with little or no cognitive or academic gain (Eccles &Barber, 1999). Instead of supporting English Language learning, clubs become detached from instructional goals.

When Informal School Clubs are treated only as entertainment, students miss opportunities to practise language skills. According to Mahoney, Cairns and Farmer (2003), structured participation improves communication skills, but unstructured recreational use limits skill development. Students may engage socially but not improve in speaking, writing, or vocabulary acquisition.

Frederick and Eccles (2006) note that extracurricular activities contribute to academic engagement only when they are purposefully linked to learning outcomes. One of the major benefits of Informal School Clubs when used in teaching and learning English language is bridging classroom knowledge with practical use, for instance in real life communicative context.

Although several studies have examined the teaching and learning of English Language in Nigeria, much of the existing literature has focused on challenges within the formal classroom environment, such as inadequate teaching methods, poor instructional materials, large class sizes, and teacher-related factors (Muhammad, Ya'u, Aliyu, and Hassan, 2018; Obeigbu, 2020; Murana, 2021; Okpala, 2025). These studies largely emphasise improving classroom practices without giving attention to alternative or complementary learning environments. Similarly, some researchers have investigated informal school clubs and extracurricular activities and their general impact on students' academic and social development. Meanwhile, a few recent studies have begun to explore the role of Informal School Clubs in English Language learning. For example, Akintola and Fakeye (2020) found that school clubs such as press clubs, drama clubs, and literary and debating societies can significantly improve students' language skills. Similarly, Sheokarah and Pilay (2021) and Simbolon, Tampubolon, and Pasaribu (2023) reported that English clubs enhance students, communicative competence, writing ability, and speaking skills.

Despite these contributions, existing studies have not sufficiently examined the availability of informal school clubs in secondary schools, nor have they adequately explored the extent to which these clubs are utilised specifically for teaching and learning English Language. It is however necessary to look into this gap because reliance on formal classroom instruction alone has been shown to limit students' opportunities for meaningful language use and communicative practice (Ayoola, Bankole, and Omoregie, 2025). Informal School Clubs provide practical, interactive, and student-centred environments that can complement classroom instruction, yet they remain underutilised or are often used solely for recreational purposes.

Statement of the Problem

Informal School Clubs such as reading clubs, debating societies, press clubs, and drama groups are designed to supplement formal instruction and provide practical, interactive opportunities for language use, their contribution to English Language learning has not been fully explored in many secondary schools. In several schools, informal clubs remain poorly organized, irregular in operation, or completely non-functional. Some exist in name only, with no structured

activities or trained facilitators to guide students. Others suffer from a lack of instructional materials, insufficient teacher supervision, or limited administrative support. Consequently, students are denied opportunities to practise English in natural, engaging and collaborative environments that could significantly enhance their proficiency. This gap becomes more concerning when viewed against the increasing demand for communicative competence and literacy skills in the contemporary, information-driven society. Therefore, this study investigated the availability and utilisation of informal school clubs that support the teaching and learning of English language in secondary schools in Irewole Local Government Area, Osun state.

Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the level of availability of informal school club activities that support the teaching and learning of English Language.
2. To examine the extent of utilisation of informal school club activities in the teaching of English Language.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of availability of informal school clubs that support the teaching and learning of English Language?
2. How often do teachers utilise informal school clubs activities in the teaching of English Language?

Scope of the Study

This study investigated the availability, adequacy and utilisation of informal school clubs that support the teaching and learning of English Language. This study covers five (5) selected secondary schools in Irewole Local Government Area, Osun state.

Significance of the Study

This study investigated the availability and utilisation of informal school clubs that support the teaching and learning of English Language. Findings from this study will be beneficial to students in that it highlights how their participation in informal school clubs can enhance their proficiency in English Language. Findings from this study will guide teachers in integrating club activities into their lesson planning, thereby enriching students' exposure to authentic language experiences.

This study will help curriculum developers and educational policymakers by providing evidence that may influence recommendations on the incorporation and strengthening of informal school clubs within secondary schools. This may lead to better policy decisions regarding school funding, resource allocation, and teacher training. It is hoped that this research will add to the body of knowledge in language education and serve as reference materials for future researchers.

Methodology

The research design adopted in this study is the survey research design. In selecting the participants, the purposive sampling technique was used to select five secondary schools that have informal school clubs and utilise them for English Language teaching and learning. The purposive sampling technique was also used to select 40 students from each chosen school making a total of 200 students. Two research instruments were used for this study namely: Inventory of Available Informal School Clubs(r=0.75) and Utilisation of Informal School Clubs Scale (0.78). The researcher, with the research assistants personally administered the instruments in the five selected secondary schools. The data collection lasted three weeks. The data collected in this study were analysed using descriptive statistics made up of mean, standard deviation, percentage and frequency count.

Results

Research question 1: What is the level of availability of informal school clubs that support the teaching and learning of English Language?

Table 1: Availability of Informal School Clubs supporting the Teaching and Learning of English

S/N	Informal School Club	Available (f)	%	Not Available (f)	%
1	Literary and Debating Club	5	100.0	0	0.0
2	Drama/Theatre Club	5	100.0	0	0.0
3	Press Club	5	100.0	0	0.0
4	Red Cross Society	0	0.0	5	100.0
5	JET Club	1	20.0	4	80.0
6	Young Farmers Club	5	100.0	0	0.0
7	ICT/Computer Club	0	0.0	5	100.0
8	Music Club	0	0.0	5	100.0
9	Cultural and Heritage Club	5	100.0	0	0.0
10	Boys Scout/Girls Guide Society	1	20.0	4	80.0

Total f = 27 Average = 2.70 Weighted % = 54.0% Threshold = 50.0%

Table 1 presents the availability of informal school clubs that support the teaching and learning of English Language across the five sampled secondary schools. The Literary and Debating Club, Drama/Theatre Club, Press Club, Young Farmers Club, and Cultural and Heritage Club were each available in all five schools (100.0%). The JET Club and Boys Scout/Girls Guide Society were each available in only one school (20.0%), while the Red Cross Society, ICT/Computer Club, and Music Club were not available in any of the schools (0.0%). With the average availability of 2.7, and the overall weighted percentage of 54.0%, against the threshold of 50.0%, it can be concluded that the level of availability of informal school clubs supports the teaching and learning of English Language in the sampled schools is generally high.

Research Question 2: How often do teachers utilise informal school club activities in the teaching of English Language?

Table 2: Teachers' Utilisation of Informal School Clubs in the Teaching of English Language

S/N	Item	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Mean	SD	Remark
1	I utilise informal school clubs to support my English Language lessons	8(53.3)	4(26.7)	2(13.3)	1(6.7)	3.27	0.961	Utilised
2	I integrate club activities into English Language teaching	8(53.3)	4(26.7)	2(13.3)	1(6.7)	3.27	0.961	Utilised
3	I encourage students to participate in informal school clubs that enhance English learning	14(93.3)	1(6.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3.93	0.258	Utilised
4	I use club activities to reinforce topics taught in the English classroom	6(40.0)	6(40.0)	2(13.3)	1(6.7)	3.13	0.915	Utilised
5	Club activities help me teach speaking and listening skills more effectively	10(66.7)	3(20.0)	1(6.7)	1(6.7)	3.47	0.915	Utilised
6	Reading club activities enhance students' comprehension and vocabulary skills	11(73.3)	3(20.0)	0(0.0)	1(6.7)	3.60	0.828	Utilised
7	Drama and role -play activities in clubs improve students' pronunciation and fluency	11(73.3)	3(20.0)	0(0.0)	1(6.7)	3.60	0.828	Utilised
8	Debate club activities help students develop confidence and accuracy in English communication	11(73.3)	4(26.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3.73	0.458	Utilised
9	I supervise or coordinate a club that supports English Language learning	11(73.3)	4(26.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3.73	0.458	Utilised
10	I collaborate with club coordinators to enrich English Language lessons	10(66.7)	4(26.7)	0(0.0)	1(6.7)	3.53	0.834	Utilised
11	Club meetings provide additional opportunities for students to practice English outside class hours	12(80.0)	1(6.7)	1(6.7)	1(6.7)	3.60	0.910	Utilised
12	I use outputs from clubs (e.g., magazines, debates, drama) as instructional materials	4(26.7)	7(46.7)	3(20.0)	1(6.7)	2.93	0.884	Utilised
13	I receive support from the school administration to use informal school clubs in teaching	7(46.7)	7(46.7)	0(0.0)	1(6.7)	3.33	0.816	Utilised
14	The time allocated for club activities is adequate for meaningful English Language engagement	7(46.7)	5(33.3)	1(6.7)	2(13.3)	3.13	1.060	Utilised
15	Regular utilisation of informal school clubs improves students' achievement in English Language	9(60.0)	6(40.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3.60	0.507	Utilised
Weighted mean = 3.46				**Threshold mean = 2.50**				

Table 2 presents the rate at which teachers utilise informal school clubs in the teaching of English Language. All the 15 items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50. The weighted mean scores of 3.46 is above the weighted mean of 2.50 indicating that teachers generally utilise informal school clubs in teaching English Language. The highest-rated item was "I encourage students to participate in informal school clubs that enhance English learning" (Mean = 3.93, SD = 0.258), suggesting that teachers strongly promote learners' participation in club activities as an extension of classroom instruction. The least-rated item was "I use outputs from clubs (e.g., magazines, debates and drama) as instructional materials" (Mean = 2.93, SD = 0.884).

With a weighted mean of 3.46 against the threshold mean of 2.50, it can be concluded that teachers frequently utilise informal school clubs in the teaching of English.

Discussion of Findings

The level of availability of informal school clubs supporting the teaching and learning of English Language

The findings of the study revealed that English Language-related informal school clubs are generally available in the sampled secondary schools, with Literary and Debating Club, Drama/Theatre Club and Press Club being the most prominent. The findings are consistent with those of Akintola (2022), who reported the availability of Literary and Debating Club, Press Club, Drama Club, JET Club, Cultural Club and other informal school clubs in secondary schools within Ogbomoso Local Government Area of Oyo State. The similarity between the two studies may be attributed to the comparable structure of public secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria, where extracurricular programmes are largely influenced by similar educational policies and school administrative practices.

The frequency of utilisation of Informal School Club activities in the teaching of English Language

The findings of this study revealed that teachers reported a high level of utilisation of informal school club activities in the teaching of English Language. This indicates that teachers perceive informal school clubs as valuable extensions of classroom instruction through which learners are provided with additional opportunities to practise speaking, reading, writing and other language skills in authentic situations. The findings also suggest that teachers recognise the instructional value of extracurricular activities beyond their recreational functions.

The findings are in agreement with those of Akhmad, Akhmad and Abas (2025), who reported that English Language teachers utilised club activities to reinforce classroom instruction. The findings also corroborate those of Akintola (2022), who found that teachers held positive perceptions regarding the use of informal school club activities in teaching English Language.

Conclusion

The study investigated the availability and utilisation of informal school club activities that support the teaching and learning of English Language in Irewole Local Government Area of Osun state. Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that informal school clubs are available in the sampled secondary schools and serve as valuable platforms for supporting English language teaching and learning. The study established that both teachers and students make use of these clubs to improve language skills through practical and interactive learning experiences.The availability and effective utilisation of informal school clubs provide learners with opportunities to practise listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a less formal environment. Consequently, informal school clubs complement classroom instruction and contribute positively to students' English language development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

School administrators should establish and sustain a variety of informal school clubs that support the teaching and learning of English language.

English language teachers should regularly integrate activities from informal school clubs into their teaching strategies to promote active learning.

Students should be encouraged to participate actively in relevant informal school clubs to improve their language proficiency and communication skills.

Government and educational authorities should provide financial and material support for school clubs by supplying learning materials and organising inter-school club activities.

School management should organise periodic training, seminars, and workshops for teachers serving as club coordinators to enhance their effectiveness.

Parents should encourage their children to

participate actively in school clubs that promote academic and language development.

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