



# School Environment and Academic Performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Rivers State

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## Abstract

The study investigated on the relationship between School Environment and Academic Performance of Students in Junior Secondary schools in Rivers State. The school environmental factors investigated include school facilities, teachers' competence. Using the correlational research design, the study was guided by two research questions and two corresponding hypotheses. The population for the study was made up of all junior secondary school students. During the 2017/2018 academic session in Rivers, while the sample was composed of 5057 students drawn using multistage sampling techniques. A researcher-developed instrument was used for data collection made up of 10 items. Test-retest reliability yielded a value of 0.76 analysis of data was done using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and z-test associated with PPMC. Result revealed that all school environment factors significantly relate with academic performance. From the result obtained it was recommended among others that adequate facilities should be provided to ensure improved academic performance of students.

**Keywords:** School Environment, Academic Performance, Junior, Secondary School, Students, Rivers State.

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## INTRODUCTION

Generally in the whole world, education has been considered to be the most valuable tool for development. It forms the basis for literacy, technological advancement, skill acquisition and ability to harness human and material resources towards the achievement of societal goal (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). Education is very important in any given society. It is a process by which abilities and capabilities of individuals are developed. These abilities might be physical abilities, emotional abilities, social abilities and intellectual abilities. It is also the actualizing of human endowment so that the individual can become something more than he was before. Oxford English Dictionary (2013) defined education as systematic training and instruction designed to impart knowledge and develop skill. Education is the process by which society, through schools, colleges, universities and other institutions deliberately transmits its cultural heritage, its accumulated knowledge, values and skills from one generation to another Ogbondah (2006).

According to Kneller (1965) in Uriah (2005), education is simply the different experiences that people go through in life, which help in nurturing of the personal growth (Elekwa, 2013). In its broadest sense, education is simply one aspect of socialization. It involves the acquisition of knowledge and the learning skills whether intentionally or unintentionally (Haralambos, 2013; Ajayi & Ayodele, 2001). Education also helps to shape beliefs and moral values. As a result of deregulation in Nigerian education, the system of education has two main interest groups-public education and private education. We would concentrate on public education. Public schools are universal, open and available for everyone; public education is the backbone and crux of any society that open the way to equal educational opportunity to all citizens. It is also a public owned property which captivates public attention constantly. According to Ukeje in Akpa et al. (2005):

Public school is concerned with the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies of both mental and physical nature as equipment for the individual to live in this society, and acquisition of a relevant and balanced knowledge of facts about local and world phenomena (pp. 12-13).

Public schools can also be defined as schools that are controlled and supported by the government of the state or nation. Secondary school can be defined as a school intermediate between elementary school and college usually offering general technical, vocational or college preparatory course it can also be seen as the level of education following primary school (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2009). School environment is widely characterized by its facilities, classroom- based health supports, disciplinary policies and practices. It sets the stage for the external factor that affects students (Ololube, 2009). A positive school environment can be defined as school having appropriate facilities, well managed classroom, available school base health support and a fair disciplinary policies and practices (Amanchukwu & Ololube, 2015). There are many hallmarks of the academic, disciplinary and physical environment of schools with a positive climate (Lee & Smith, 1999). Supportive school environments have good or positive influence on students' outcomes. Poor school environment are strongly limited to poor test scores exam score, low graduation rate, low attendance rates and student's disengagement.

The outward look and general situation of school physical facilities are one of the conditions that attract or repel many parents' guidance and friends of any educational institution and also to make initial judgment about the quality of services rendered in the school. Most parents are often disappointed by dilapidated school building, with broken walls, bushy compound, leaking roofs etc. According to Ololube (2009), the school is like a mirror of the society in which it operates. The school physical environment reflects the true image of the school and this determines the decisions of the general public to associate with the particular school. Various studies done on effect of school environment on academic performance attest the fact that school environment that is not conducive for learning may lead to under performance (Chimombe, 2011).

Provision of adequate learning facilities at all levels including equipment and human resources enhances the quality and relevance of imparted skills of learners (Lumuli, 2009). Learning involves interaction of students with the environment teaching and learning resources include classrooms laboratories, libraries, playing fields, textbooks among others. Indeed physical resources go a long way in creating conducive environment that promote effective teaching and learning. It is with this in mind that the draft report on cost and financing of education (Ololube, 2011) identified textbook ratio and school facilities as some yard sticks to be used to gauge the quality of secondary school educations.

Juman (2011) linked performance in examination to state of teaching and learning resources in schools. He noted that students from poor backgrounds perform poorly in the examination because the poor are often in areas where schools are seriously deprived of vital facilities, an attitude of helplessness may be inculcated early into children making them feel that being in school is a waste of time. Physical materials in terms of adequacy and quality have been noted to have a great impact on performance of students in the examination (Akomolafe & Adesua, 2016).

A school that has adequate instructional materials is likely to post better quality grades than a school which has poor quality physical resources. A school with inadequate classrooms will be forced to accommodate more students than recommended. This exerts a lot of pressure on resources such as teachers who may compromise their methodology as part of adaptive mechanism (Nafukho, 1991; Nambuya, 2013). The lack of basic facilities like laboratory has compromise the teaching of science subjects. Topics meant to be taught practically are taught theoretically as part of adaptive mechanism by teachers due to inadequate resources to enable effective teaching of the same. This affects the student's performance negatively, reducing their competitiveness for opportunities whose placement is pegged on performance in such subjects (Bukowski & Kobus, 2018; Lumuli, 2009). This study proposes to establish the state of school environment in public secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis in order to evaluate how it is impacting on academic performance of public secondary schools.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Education is a fundamental ingredient for the development of any nation. Sadly the Nigerian education system, especially at the junior secondary level has been fraught with significant limitation. In addition to poor facilities for teaching and learning, student often come from far distance before which they come are tired and exhausted.

This has limited the ability for most students to optimally concentrate. Furthermore, in most of these schools, the teachers lack competence in instructional delivery. While this situation

has attracted massive attention from scholars, they see to be limited investigation in this area within Rivers state. To provide needed response. This study seeks to address the extent to which school environment influences academic performance of junior secondary school students.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of school environment on academic performance of junior secondary school students in Rivers State. The objectives are:

- To ascertain whether school facilities affect academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.
- To ascertain whether teacher's competence affects academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

### **Hypotheses**

- There is no significant relationship between school facilities and academic performance of secondary school student in Rivers State.
- There is no significant relationship between teacher's competence and academic performance.

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings from the study will be of a great value and importance to government, parents, principal and of future research at large in the following ways. The government at all levels needs to commit to the delivering of a competitive standard of education across the countries. Also, the right investments need to be done in order to get the desired results. Adequate funding with good management will provide high quality education in Nigeria.

Funds for renovation of schools and institution acquiring quality training facilities, research grants, decent teachers' salaries and welfare, etc. are the things that needed to be increased, released and spent appropriately. Necessary vetting measures should be taken to make sure that only qualified teachers are employed. In addition government in formulating effective plan and implementation of policies and also programmes for improved school academic activities.

It helps parents in making the right choice of school for their children because their children would enjoy good learning environment that will lead to quality school products. It would help the teacher to improve both in teaching effectively and increase in productivity of the school. It would enable the school principal to improve on school supervision so as to ensure both quality teaching and learning in the school.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study presents the research procedure employed in conducting the research work. The design of the study is a correlational survey. Correlation statistics are used to establish relationship between two or more variables. The population for this study comprises of some selected junior secondary school students in Port Harcourt metropolis. According to data from

the Rivers State ministry of education, they are about 219 public secondary schools in Rivers state with a total number of 56,391 students in junior secondary schools level. From the total population, sample sizes of 5057 students were drawn from three local governments area using the multistage sampling technique. First the researcher divided the 23 local government areas into the three senatorial zones. Thereafter one local government area each was randomly selected from the selection zone, the LGAs selected were Obio/Akpor, Eleme and Ahoada East. From there LGAs, the researcher decided to use 30% of students. Thereafter, the researcher adopted the convenience sampling technique to administer the instrument on any available student in their respective schools. Until the required number of respondent was attained.

To achieve the objective of this study, relevant data were drawn from secondary and primary sources. The secondary sources consist of textbooks, journal, newspapers, internet sources and report publication. The primary sources are semi-structure questionnaire. There are twenty (20) items raised in the questionnaire, which include school facilities, school location, peer group and teacher's competence. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire. It was administered by the researcher personally. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A for demographic variables and section B to research questions. The questionnaire were modeled on a 4 point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with numerical values of 4,3,2 and 1 point assigned to each of the descriptive responses respectively. Ten items each were developed in line with each of the research questions. Data on academic performance of students in mathematics and English language in the proceeding term before the data collection phase. The data collected was using Pearson Product Moment Correlation for the research question while z-test associated with Pearson was adopted in testing the hypotheses. Reliability instrument was tested using test-retest and a value of 0.76 was obtained.

## RESULT

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant relationship between school facilities and academic performance of secondary school student in Rivers State.

**Table 1: Pearson Moment Correlation coefficient analysis between school facilities and academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State**

Variables	N	Df	r-cal	Sig	p-critical	Decision
School facilities	5057	5056	0.755	0.002	0.05	Statistically significant
Academic performance						

From the result of the above table, the correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.755$ ) between school facilities and academic performance is very strong and positive. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2 = 0.57$ ) indicates that 57% of academic performance can be explained by school facilities. With the degree of freedom of 5056, the significant value of 0.002 ( $p < 0.05$ ) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between school facilities and academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant relationship between teacher’s competence and academic performance.

Table 2: Pearson Moment Correlation coefficient analysis on the relationship between teacher’s competence and academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State

Variables	N	Df	r-cal	Sig	p-critical	Decision
Teacher’s competence	5057	5056	0.881	0.001	0.05	Statistically significant
Academic performance						

From the result of the above table, the correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.881$ ) between teacher’s competence and academic performance is very strong and positive. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2 = 0.78$ ) indicates that 78% of academic performance can be explained by teacher’s competence. With the degree of freedom of 5056, the significant value of 0.001 ( $p < 0.05$ ) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between teacher’s competence and academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### Relationship between School Facilities and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students

From the study, the respondents agreed that they have environment is spacious and conducive classrooms, their provision of art room and electronic smart board for effective teaching, there is well grassed football field, there is a fully equipped in-house clinic staffed with medical professionals and the cozy nature of the library makes it truly a reader’s delight.

According to Amanchukwu and Ololube (2015), school facilities are the corner stone of education system. They are crucial ingredients in the effort to realize effective teaching and learning outcome. He asserted that the quality of facilities has impact not only on educational outcomes but on the well-being of students and teachers. Imms et al. (2017) stated that facilities and structures, in urban schools are worse because of high rate in enrollment figures. In urban, the facilities are grossly inadequate which makes it possible to run a shift system in schools. This has been totally condemned as it does not create room for effective teaching and learning.

This implies that effective management of school facilities brings about development of educational programmes and facilitates educational process. It also results to boosting the teacher’s morale and enhances the student usefulness in the determination of the worth of a school.

### Relationship between Teacher’s Competence and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students

From the study, the respondents agreed that teacher should have sound knowledge of the subject he/she teaches, teacher should use more of positive reinforcement, teaching should be done with passion, inability of the teacher to prepare the lesson he wants to teach affects student’s

performance, teachers skipping some topics affects student's performance, teacher's ensures that the students are listening and the subject matter is lucidly discussed.

Teachers have been found to be the single most important factors influencing student's achievement (Lasley; Sledentop, & Yinger, 2006). A class whose teacher is friendly, courteous and humorous is likely to enjoy good and cordial relationship based on respect for the dignity of everyone teachers and students alike. Ololube (2009) asserted that the effect is, the teacher would enjoy the cooperation of majority of his students, and this in turn will enhance effective teaching-learning process.

The implication is that in schools teacher play the critical role in students learning and environment. How teachers instruct and interact with these students is the cornerstone around which an effective school environment is built. Furthermore, the skills teachers possess influences student's learning outcome.

### **Summary of Findings**

- There is a significant relationship between school facilities and academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.
- There is a significant relationship between teacher's competence and academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

### **Summary**

This study examined school environment and academic performance of junior secondary school students in Rivers State. Two research questions and hypotheses were formulated in line with the objectives of the study. The hypotheses focused on the relationship between school facilities and academic performance of junior secondary school students and teacher's competence and academic performance of junior secondary school students in Rivers State. The design for the study was a correlational design with a population of 56,391 students of junior secondary schools in the 219 public secondary schools in Rivers State. The sample of the study comprised (5057) junior secondary school students in Rivers State. This was determined using the multistage sampling technique from the three senatorial zones in the state. The questionnaire contained 20 item instrument. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to analyzing both research questions hypotheses formulated, at 0.05 level of significance. The questionnaire responses were tabulated and the research questions analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, while z-test associated with Pearson was adopted in testing the hypotheses formulated. Thereafter, the findings were discussed and compared to findings of related study by other scholars.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of the study it is concluded that effective management of school facilities brings about development of educational programmes and facilitates educational process. It also results to boosting the teacher's morale and enhances the student usefulness in the determination of the worth of a school. Children feel happy in a peaceful and friendly environment where as schools sited in noisy urban street are associated with deficits in mental concentration leading to students poor performance. Moreover, a child's environment that is rural or urban exerts considerable influence on his intellectual development. Poor staffing of rural secondary schools

must have accounted for better performance of urban secondary schools. In schools teacher play the critical role in students learning and environment. How teachers instruct and interact with these students is the cornerstone around which an effective school environment is built. Furthermore, the skills teachers possess influences student's learning outcome. Also, peer groups have high influence on their members, if managed well, will impact their academic performance positively.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, it is recommended as follows:

- Adequate facilities which include both physical and human should be made available in secondary schools to enhance learning, thereby bringing better student's performance.
- In building new schools, the environment where the school will be located should be serene and safe. Schools already built in a noisy and unsafe places, should be remedied by raising the school fence high enough as to prevent distraction during learning.
- Teachers with sound knowledge of their subject areas should be mostly considered for employment, to enhance student's academic performance.
- In-service training should be organized for teachers of public secondary schools to help in facilitating teaching and learning.

## **Contribution to Knowledge**

This study has contributed to knowledge in the sense that, it has brought to the understanding and knowledge of educational stakeholders on the importance of school environment and its effect on academic performance of students. Furthermore, awareness have been raised in understanding the importance of school facilities, teacher's competence when considering student's performance in junior secondary schools. Also, from the findings of this study, emphasis have been made towards the vital role school administrators and government will play, in ensuring that academic performance of students is prioritized.

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