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The Role of Environment on Students' Academic Performance in Art Education



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ABSTRACT

This study employed a descriptive survey design in investigating the role of environment on students' academic performance in college of education, Oju Local Government Area, Benue State, Nigeria. The sample for the study was 377 respondents selected from the total population of 6,482 respondents. A stratified sampling technique was employed to select the sample. The School Environment Questionnaire (SEQ) was the instrument used for this study. Data collected were analyzed using regression analysis. The finding of this study revealed that the school environment significantly influences the academic performance of students and that the social problems students exhibit in school hurt their academic performance. Finally, recommendations were given to parents, teachers, policymakers, and educational administrators.



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INTRODUCTION

Education is the most important component of human resource development and is accorded a pride of place in many countries' developmental activities. There is no doubt that the importance of education cannot be underscored because there is no country that has succeeded without educating its people. Education according to Abdulraheem (2001) helps to improve security, health, prosperity, and ecological balance in the world. It encourages social, economic, and cultural progress, tolerance, national and international cooperation. Adewuyi (2002) describes education as the single most effective means of curbing population growth, reducing child mortality, eradicating poverty, and ensuring democracy, peace, and sustainable development.

Education is an instrument for the acquisition of appropriate skills, ability and competence both mental and physical also as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of his/her society (Adeyemi, 2008). Also, in the views of Ajayi (2007), it is the process of teaching and training of the child which has to do with imparting and acquisition of skills for a particular trade or profession in which application methods are used.

From what has been viewed as education by different authorities based on their perceptions, we can say that education is a process by which an individual acquires physical and social capabilities demanded by the society in which he/she is born into to be useful to him/her and contribute to the development of the society at large.

The primary purpose of the teaching and learning process is to bring about in the learner desirable change in behavior through critical thinking. This process, however, does not take place in a vacuum but in an environment structured to facilitate learning. Akhtar (2010) described learning environment as a physical space that supports multiple and diverse teaching-learning programs including current technologies, one that demonstrates optimal, promotes effective performance and operation over time; one that respects and is in harmony with the environment; and one that encourages social participation, provide a healthy, comfortable, safe, secure and stimulating setting for its occupants.

The environment can be defined as a system within which living organisms interact with the physical element while the education environment is a learning place where the learner learns

and interact with learning facilities to be socialized and face the challenges in the society. Dupper (2002) sees environments as consisting of all elements existing around man and which exert some influence on him. These include physical, biological, and social attributes. The environment can also be seen as an aggregate of all the external conditions and influences affecting the life and development of an organism.

In this study, the environment includes all the external conditions and influences in the school that affect the academic achievement of the student such as laboratory equipment, library facilities, qualified teachers, furniture, school building, good administrative management, teacher-pupil relationship, and school location among others.

The school environment which is the focus of our research is the thread that connects the multitude of activities on the school. In many respects, this thread is almost invisible, yet everyone experiences its influence. Eamon (2005) opined that it could be said to be the external influences in the school that can influence the academic achievement of students irrespective of their intelligent quotient. The school environment can also be considered as the second teacher since space has the power to organize and promote pleasant relationships between people of different ages, to provide changes, to promote choices and activities, and for its potential for sparking different types of social and affective learning (Earthman, 2002). It has been generally accepted that environment and heredity can hardly be separated from education in influencing achievement, hence a child's life and ability are influenced by nature and nurture. Heredity provides the natural disposition while a healthy environment makes available a window of opportunities to the learner (Fafunwa, 2010). The environmental variable of the setting helps to a large extent in ensuring the attainability of the goals of such a setting. The environmental differences and the differences in the quality of instruction from one school to another can create differences in the level of knowledge acquisition of the students. This shows that the learning facilities children are exposed to and the socio-economic influence on them can affect their academic achievement.

The school environment includes the school building and the surrounding grounds such as noise, temperature, and lighting as well as physical, biological, or chemical agents (Goldmith, 2004). The school environment can then be seen to include material and human resources, a learning

place that consists of the entire interaction. The learning environment is both the natural and provided setting where teaching and learning take place. Kalyani & Radhakrishna (2002) referred to teaching and learning environment as the setting physical and conceptual in which teaching and learning are carried out as deliberately planned. And to Lawal (2003), the learning environment means classroom surroundings, physical facilities in the classroom, and teacher-pupil relationships. Studies on the relationship between the availability of resources and students' academic achievement have revealed that secondary schools provided with adequate education resources performed significantly better than those provided with inadequate resources (Manninen, 2007). The environment is a very important factor in the achievement of the goal of any educational program. People acquire most of their knowledge through interaction with facilities provided in the environment for learning. Also, learning is influenced by the environment people are exposed to and the facilities provided in such an environment lead to experience. As in the words of Piaget (1964) that active interaction with the environment is regarded as the most basic requirement for proper intellectual development.

The physical appearance and general condition of school physical facilities are the striking basis upon which many parents and friends of any educational institution make an initial judgment about the quality of what goes on in the school. They are often turned off by dilapidated school blocks with sinking roofs and broken walls, bushy lawns, and overgrown hedges. Also are profane writings on walls, littered lawns, and pathways. Finally, the school's physical environment is like a mirror reflecting the image of a school and through it, the public decides whether or not to associate with the particular school (Neal, 2009).

From the foregoing one can see that the school environment plays a crucial role in the academic achievement of a child. This problem of poor performance is more pronounced in ill-equipped schools hence it becomes necessary to find out the influence of the school environment on the academic achievement of students in the college of education, Oju.

Statement of the Problem

The problem under study has to do with the unsatisfactory condition of the educational system being operated in Nigeria. The establishment of public schools/private schools has resulted in a

situation whereby some schools were favored in terms of the provision of a rich environment over others. It has been very difficult if not impossible for the government to standardize the school environment. Thus, the environment varies from school to school.

In recent times it is has become a common phenomenon to read or hear incidence of student involvement in anti-social behavior such as teenage pregnancy/parenting, child abuse, alcohol intakes, drug abuse, rape, prostitution, sexual prevision, stealing, cultism, adolescent suicide, school dropout and all kind of wanton misdemeanor. Many have agreed that deviant act perpetrated by students is responsible for the downward turn in academic performance and social adjustment of these students. It is not certain whether efforts are taken by researchers, teachers, school administrators, and stakeholders at linking behavior among students to the environmental influence with a view of curbing these behaviors have yielded any fruits in the past.

In the light of the overall challenge of the influence of environment on the academic performance of students, this study was set out to examine the role of environment on the academic performance of students in the college of education, Oju.

Purpose of the Study

This research work is aimed at investigating the role of environment on the academic performance of students in the College of Education, Oju. Specifically, the study intends to:

- i. To examine how the school environment influences students' academic performance.
- ii. To identify the influence of teachers on students' academic performance.
- iii. To analyze how school climate influence students' academic performance.

Research Questions

This study will be guided by the following questions:

- i. How does the school environment influence students' academic performance?

ii. In which ways do teachers influence students' academic performance?

iii. How does school climate influence students' academic performance?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated to be tested statistically at: 0.05, level of significance:

H₀₁: The school environment does not influence students' academic performance.

H₀₂: Teachers do not influence students' academic performance.

H₀₃: School climate does not influence students' academic performance.

Significance of the Study

Over the years, the environment of Nigerian schools has suffered neglect in consideration of issues of renovating dilapidated classrooms, construction of new classroom buildings, and provisions of other necessary facilities. This is obvious in the way that students in some secondary schools are learning in dilapidated classrooms or under the trees with little or no seats, no instructional facilities with unqualified teachers among others. Therefore, this study will be of great importance in providing relevant information that can be used by the government at whatever level (federal, state, and local) who is seen as the principal actor in terms of educational development in the society to provide adequate facilities and maintenance strategies in secondary schools.

Secondly, the findings of this study will be of relevance to students because it will provide insight into the problems whose solutions might help in taking specific actions which will efficiently and effectively address the poor performance of students as a result of the poor nature of our schools in Nigeria today.

Again, the findings of this study are relevant to teachers who are the principal agents of curriculum implementation because it provides recommendations that would help them to make appropriate utilization of the learning environment to create a conducive atmosphere that would

enhance effective teaching and learning. It is a fact that people work better in places where they feel comfortable and it is believed that the results of this work offered recommendations on how to better up poor conditions of schools thereby creating enabling environment for teachers' job satisfaction which no doubt will have a positive effect on students' learning outcome.

The work is of great advantage to non-governmental organizations such as United Nation Children and Education Fund (UNICEF), United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and other related agencies to see the poor conditions of secondary schools in Nigeria and intervene where necessary.

Also, in a situation where the government has been incurring a lot of expenditure in her budget to enhance educational programs for individual and national development and the attainment of educational goals in general. But, only to discover that her efforts have not been yielding the desired results. This kind of situation is usually not a healthy one hence calling for immediate solutions of which the results of these findings might be of help to the government to compare its allocation of resources to education and what is obtainable in reality and adjust where necessary.

The work made recommendations that would help school heads on how to maintain facilities of learning environment appropriately to create enabling and friendly environment to enhance the learning process and realization of educational objectives. The study also added to the body of literature on the learning environment and students' academic performance which would serve as a source of reference for people who will conduct research in related areas.

Curriculum developers and school plant planners would hopefully benefit from the outcome of the findings of this study because both the school plant planners and the curriculum developers need information about the current state of the learning environment, especially the physical aspects either to develop new school buildings or for reviewing or developing a new curriculum. However, it is essential to take into consideration the available instructional materials, facilities, and equipment of the physical learning environment before reviewing or developing a new curriculum.

Scope of the Study

This study is limited to the school of Art, college of education, Ojuand is focused on the role of the environment on the academic performance of students.

Research Design

This research work adopted the descriptive survey research design to find out the role of environment on students' academic performance. A descriptive survey design was adopted because this design is aimed at collecting information that demonstrates relationships and describes the world as it exists. A survey comes in different modes, be it interviewing people face to face or handing out questionnaires to fill out. The study took the quantitative approach because it was based on variables measured with numbers and analyzed with statistical procedures.

Area of the Study

The research was conducted in the school of Art, college of education, OjuBenue State, Nigeria. The motive for the selection of Ojuwas is because the local government is a rural area where research on the impact of the environment on students' academic performance has not been conducted as such, there is a research gap.

The population of the Study

The student population in the school of Art, college of education, Oju for the 2020/2021 session was about 6,482 students which consist of 4157 male students and 2325 female students.

Sample and Sampling

The sample for the study was 377 respondents selected from the total population of 6,482 respondents. This is in line with Krejcie& Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample size from a given population. A stratified sampling technique was employed to select the sample for the study.

Research Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for effective data collection is a questionnaire that contained two parts. Part 1 and 2, part one contains questions related to demographic information while part 2 contains questions related to the school environment, School Environment Questionnaire (SEQ). The questionnaire consists of 10 items statements relating to school environment usage with a five (5) point rating scale, namely; strongly agreed, agreed, strongly disagreed, disagreed and undecided.

Method of Data Collection

The data for this study were collected using SEQ. The SEQ is a twenty (20) minutes questionnaire related to the school environment. To establish both the face, content, and construct validity of the research instruments, the drafted instruments were given to the team of supervisors and other experts in the Departments of Chemistry, Social Studies, Geography College of Education, Oju for their assessment, corrections, comments, and suggestions.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from this study were subjected to statistical analysis. The demographic variables of age, gender, parents' occupation, and educational level were analyzed using frequency and simple percentages. The data collected were analyzed using regression analysis.

Data Presentation & Interpretation

The result of this study is presented in three forms, thus, Demographic characteristic, descriptive analysis, and inferential analysis. Therefore, the result and analysis are as follows;

Demographic Information

The demographic information of the three hundred and seventy-seven (377) respondents selected for this study is presented in table 4.1 below.

Table no 1 Demographic Information of respondents

	Sex		Age		Tribe	
	Boys	Girls	15-18	19-25	Igede	Others
Freq.	185	192	286	91	151	226
%	49.1%	50.9%	75.9%	24.1 %	41%	59%

The demographic information of the respondents as presented in Table 1 above reveals the distribution of the respondents, based on demographic characteristics. By gender 185(49.1%) were boys, and 192(50.9%) were girls. Based on the age of the respondents 286(75.9%) were between the age of 15-18 while 91(24.1%) were between the age of 19-25. Based on the tribe,151(51%) were Indians, and 226(59%) were others.

Description of the Study Variables

The main variables examined in this study were school environment (independent variables), and academic performance (dependent variable). Descriptive finding for all the variables is presented in Table 2 below.

Table no 2: Descriptive statistics

Variables	Mean	St. D	No.
Performance (Y)	54.34	21.199	377
School Environment(X)	3.18	0.351	377

Based on the data collected from three hundred and seventy-seven (377) respondents in the table above, the mean academic performance (dependent variable) of the respondents is 54.34 with a standard deviation of 21.199. It means that the performance is generally above average while the school environment has a mean score of 3.18 with a standard deviation of 0.351.

RESULTS

H₀: School Environment does not Influence Students' Academic Performance. To test the hypothesis and assess whether the school environment has a significant influence on students' academic performance. The data collected from the 377 respondents and their respective schools were analyzed using the regression analysis and tested at a 0.05 level of significance as presented below (Table 3 and 4).

Table no 3: Summary of Regression Analysis Results

regression Model	Dependent Variable (Students Performance)
R	0.20
r ²	0.040
Adjusted r ²	0.037
Observation	377

The result from table 3 above showed that there is a positive correlation between the school environment and academic performance. In the regression statistics $r=0.20$, while r^2 is 0.040. It means that the independent variable (school environment) explained 4% variations from the expected and actual results of the dependent variable (academic performance). This indicates a good fit of the regression equation. Thus, this is an accurate reflection that academic performance is influenced by the school environment.

Table no 4: Test of significance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95% C.I	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant) School Environment	15.987	9.774	.20	1.636	.103	3.223	35.206
	12.048	3.052		3.948	.000	6.047	18.049

The test of significance results, as presented in Table 4.4 above shows that $t=3.948$, with $df=375$ and p -values ($0.00 < 0.05$). It indicated that at a 5% level of significance there is enough evidence that the regression equation is well-specified that a significant relationship between the school environment and academic performance exists. Based on the findings we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the school environment has a significant influence on students' academic performance.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study posits that the school environment plays a significant role in students' academic performance. From the analyzed data of 377 respondents, the school environment appeared to have a significant influence on students' academic performance. Based on the regression statistical analysis, the school environment r value about academic performance is (0.20), and $r^2=0.040$. It signifies that the school environment accounts for 40% of the change in students' academic performance. However, from the data collected, it appears that a school with adequate modern equipment enhances learning. The result of the data proves that the school enriched with modern equipment such as computers, internet, enriched laboratory, and a library make learning easier and faster. Likewise, school enriched with intelligent teachers, favorable learning atmosphere, an excellent teacher-student relationship, and good school-parent relationship facilitates learning development. Therefore, these advantages result in high academic performance. Therefore, the importance of the school environment in influencing academic performance cannot be over-emphasized. Students need a school with favorable learning facilities to perform well. This means that when the school environment is enriched with modern educational facilities facilitates learning.

The result of this research agrees with the opinion of most psychologists; that a weak relationship between teachers and students has a diverse effect on students' attitudes in respect of events in the teaching-learning environment. Therefore, the teacher should be friendly and not mean, appear admirable but not seductive. He should attend to the need of students and be aware of the differences between them and be fair and firm in dealing with them. It is important to note that when healthy teacher-teacher relationships exist in school. It goes a long way in the

promotion of learning among students. And this enables them to share knowledge and experience that will enhance the better school environment (Glassman 2004).

CONCLUSION

From the finding of this study, it was concluded that the school environment significantly influences students' academic performance. As observed from the research, students from schools with adequate learning facilities, good teacher-student relationships, and a favorable learning environment perform well. Therefore, the research concludes that the school environment does influence students' academic performance.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Teachers should be provided moral, psychological, and physical support to students and also live by example. This will help students avoid or deal with deviant behaviors.
- ii. Parents should be enlightened to appreciate the benefits of encouraging and motivating their children to achieve a balanced academic and social life. They should also make regular unscheduled visits to their children's schools to see how they are faring.
- iii. The school authorities should embark on providing and encouraging recreational activities such as athletics, football, track and field, debating societies, scrabble, and creative writing. These activities will inculcate discipline in the students and also keep them away from deviant and criminal attitudes. They will equally develop the spirit of sportsmanship, friendship, competitiveness, and comradeship which are essential to social balance.
- iv. Government should endeavor to provide schools with adequate facilities. This will enhance a conducive climate for learning, thereby minimizing students' stress which often engenders acts of deviance.
- v. Future researchers should try to conduct more research on the factors affecting academic performance to other levels of education.

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