Article title: Influence of Learning Environment on the Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Makurdi Metropolis

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Keywords: Learning Environment, Academic Performance, Secondary School Students, Makurdi Metropolis, Teacher's qualification
Influence of Learning Environment on the Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Makurdi Metropolis

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Abstract
School environment has tremendous influence in the quality of teaching students receives and the extent of attention they pay to lesson in school. This implies that schools that fail to provide the necessary learning facilities and create conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning may hardly give the best to their students especially in the area of academic performance. This scenario is one of the reasons for poor academic performance of students in many secondary schools in the study area. The main thrust of this paper is to investigate the influence of learning environment on academic performance of secondary school students in Makurdi metropolis of Benue State. Three research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of this study comprised 2, 090 secondary school students from which 399 were selected randomly from 30 secondary schools in Makurdi. A 15-item structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled the Influence of Learning Environment on the Academic Performance of Students” (ILEAPS) was used for data collection. Mean and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions. The results of the study revealed adequate provision of infrastructures makes students learn with ease thus bringing about good academic achievement (3.82), poor and inadequate physical facilities, obsolete teaching techniques, overcrowded classrooms leads to poor academic achievement of students (3.67), unattractive school buildings and overcrowded classrooms contributes to poor academic achievement of the students in secondary school (3.60). The study also revealed that what happens outside school also affects learning progress (3.45), students from home that has educational facilities perform greater in school than those whose parent do not (3.43) and parental occupational status affects students’ academic performance (3.38). The study further revealed that indiscipline among teachers results to retarding students’ academic performance (3.50) and students who are taught by trained professional teachers perform better than those untrained professional teachers (3.42). The study concludes that learning environment influences the performance of students. Based on the findings, the study recommends that Benue State Government should provide adequate school facilities in secondary schools to enhance teaching and learning processes. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA), philanthropist and other charitable organizations are also implored to compliment the effort of the government to boost academic achievement of secondary school students by contributing to modern learning infrastructures to schools.

Keyword: Learning Environment, Academic Performance, Secondary School Students, Makurdi Metropolis and teacher’s qualification
Introduction

Education is viewed as a critical investment, not only to the individual, but also to the society. All countries of the world are prioritizing this investment especially in formal education. In recent time, Ghana is ranked the most educated country in West Africa which is reflected in its literacy rate and performance in West Africa Examination Council over the years (UNESCO, 2015). Poor performance of students in other West Africa countries is attributed to a variety of factors depending on the country in question.

The issue of poor academic performance of students in Nigeria has been of much concern to the government, parents, teachers and even student themselves. The quality of education not only depends on the teachers as reflected in the carrying out of their duties, but also in the effective coordination of the school environment (Ajao, 2001). Education is an essential factor for effective development of any country like Nigeria. The western education adopted by Nigeria is highly based on individualism, socio-economic and internationalization which are geared towards national development. In the view of Ada (2005), one of the major obstacles to the development of secondary schools in Benue State especially in Zone ‘B’ Senatorial District of Benue State is the persistent poor academic achievement of students. Based on this fact, people believe that the standard of education is falling in Benue State and Nigeria in general. Poor academic performance as recorded in recent years was so bad that many students fall short of the requirement necessary for admission into higher education. According to Ajewole and Okebukola (2000), a number of factors are said to contribute to students’ poor academic performance in school. The authors stress that some of these factors include: poor study habits, lack of available resource materials, poor school climate, indiscipline, inadequate facilities,
teachers’ ineffectiveness, the teaching method and the learning environment. The poor performance of students in secondary school may be a reflection of the learning environment.

Akande (1995) emphasized that learning can occur through one’s interaction with one’s environment. Environment here refers to facilities that are available to facilitate students learning outcome. It includes books, audio-visual, software and hardware of educational technology; so also, size of classroom, sitting position and arrangement, availability of tables, chairs, chalkboards, shelves on which instruments for practical are arranged (Farrant, 1991 and Farombi, 1998). Tsavga (2011) maintains that the learning environment plays a vital role in determining how students perform or respond to circumstances and situations around them. This implies that no society is void of environmental influences. The learning environment determines to a large extent how a student behaves and interacts, that is to say that the environment in which we find ourselves tend to mould our behaviour so as to meet the demands of life whether negatively or positively. The desire for both qualitative and quantitative education has multiplied the problem of providing an effective and conducive learning environment for teaching and learning. In Nigeria, there is an increase in the number of student enrolment in schools with little or no regards to improving the learning environment so as to improve performance. Freiberg, Driscoll and Knights (1999) observe that some of the notable factors that may influence students’ academic achievement in secondary schools are school climate, instructional materials, discipline, physical facilities, teacher’s qualification, location and class size. This is because schools with good and conducive environment with good teachers, instructional materials and physical facilities will produce better school leavers. Most at times, parents of students are not satisfied with the facilities provided in their schools. Also, the extent at which some teachers, exhibit high level of indiscipline does not seem to portray them as role models. They rather
encourage indiscipline among students by their attitudes. This may have negative influence of students’ academic performance. Adzemba (2006) defines learning as a relatively permanent change in behaviour due to practice and experience. This definition agrees with Akoja (2006), who views learning as a relatively permanent change in behavior as a result of insight, practice, experience or stimuli in the environment. School environment is the immediate surroundings of the school which also include classrooms, dining halls, examination halls and football fields among others. For learning to be meaningful and effective, learning environment in the view of Zaria in Aliade (2008) is a place where teachers impact knowledge of the various subjects to students thereby bringing them up morally. Awule cited in Aliade (2008) stated that learning environment should have good infrastructural development, adequate trained teachers, good leadership and adequate instructional materials among others. All these characteristics according to the author have positive impact on academic achievement of students in secondary schools. In the same vein Abenga (1995) opined that an improved environmental condition leads to higher intelligence scores while poor environmental conditions reduce these scores. Academic achievement in this context simply means the scores students have obtained in either examination or test.

Most secondary school students begin their career with a desire to learn and with an intrinsic approach to achievement, which later switches to a more extrinsic orientation as students’ age. Environmental influence has been identified as an important factor affecting students’ academic performance (Wildman and Calhoun as cited in Odeh, 2015).
Statement of the Problem

The influence of school environment on academic performance of students has been an issue of concern to all stakeholders in education. This is evident in the rate of mass failure of students in both internal and external examinations, as revealed by research studies. Despite the Benue State government’s effort towards the provision and renovation of infrastructures in secondary schools, students’ performance in both internal and external examinations such as WAEC and NECO (National Examination Council) Entrance and State Common Entrance Examinations and other entrance examinations into higher institution is still very low and below expectation. Several research studies have identified other factors such as school climate, instructional materials, discipline, teacher’s qualification, class size and over population of students in classroom as being responsible for poor academic achievement of students (Ada, 2005).

The researcher has observed with dismay that the school environment in the study area is poor. Infrastructural facilities are in dilapidated conditions, lack of trained teachers and other facilities that promote teaching and learning are also in short fall which may tend to influence students’ academic performance in schools. It is on this premise that the researcher is motivated to assess the influence of learning environment on the performance of secondary school students in Makurdi metropolis.

Objective of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives.
1. To examine the impact of school facilities on the academic performance of secondary school students in Makurdi metropolis.

2. To identify the influence of home environment on academic performance of secondary school students in Makurdi metropolis.

3. To examine the influence of teacher’s qualification on the academic performance of secondary school students in Makurdi metropolis.

**Methodology**

**Research Design**

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. Descriptive survey research design is that type of design that seeks to obtain data from subjects of their preferences, opinions, attitudes, and behaviors. The design was deemed appropriate for this study because the researcher elicited data from the respondents on the influence of school environmental factors on academic performance.

**Population for the Study**

The population of this study comprised of 2,090 secondary school students from thirty (30) secondary schools in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State.

**Sample and Sampling Technique**

The sample for this study was 399 secondary school students using the Yaro Yamen’s approach. Multistage sampling techniques was used in this study, this technique was convenient because the sampling was done in stages.
A purposive sampling technique was used to sample Northbank, Wadata ward and Ankpa ward from Makurdi metropolis. This is because these areas have the highest numbers of secondary school in Makurdi (Odeh et al., 2015). Simple random sampling technique was used to choose thirty (30) secondary schools from the selected ward and the instruments were randomly administered to three hundred and ninety nine (399) respondents from these schools.

**Method of Data Collection**

A questionnaire tagged “the influence of learning environment on the academic performance of students” (ILEAPS) with reliability coefficient of 0.85 was used as the instrument for data collection. The instrument comprise of fifteen (15) items. The instrument was validated by three senior lecturers from the department of Mathematics/Computer Science Education University of Agriculture Makurdi.

**Method of Data Analysis**

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of means and standard deviation.

**Results and Discussion**

The results of the study are presented on Table 1-3.

Data in Table 1 showed that 4 out of the 5 items had their mean values ranged from 3.39 to 3.82, indicating that their mean values were within the limit of 3.50 and 4.00. This showed that the respondents agreed that there is a relationship between school facility and academic performance of student.
Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Relationship between School Facilities and Student Academic Performance (N = 399)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Adequate provision of infrastructures makes students learn with ease thus bringing about good academic achievement.</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Poor and inadequate physical facilities, obsolete teaching techniques, overcrowded classrooms leads to poor academic achievement of students.</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>School facilities when provided will aid teaching learning programme and consequently improve academic achievement of students.</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Facilities form one of the potent factors that contribute to academic achievement of students in the school system.</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Unattractive school buildings and overcrowded classrooms contributes to poor academic achievement of the students in secondary school</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cluster Mean and Standard deviation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cluster Mean and Standard deviation</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SD = Standard Deviation of respondents.

Data in Table 2 showed that all the 5 items had their mean values ranged from 3.09 to 3.46, which were above the cutoff point of 2.50. This showed that the respondents agreed that all the 5 items have effect on student academic performance.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Influence of Home Environment on Student’s Academic Performance (N = 399)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>What happens outside school also affects learning progress.</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Parental occupational status affects students’ academic performance</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Students from home that has educational facilities perform greater in school than those whose parent do not</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Students from literate and well provided home where parents understand their basics as caretakers have academic advantage over those from poor illiterate home</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Students who enjoys good human relationships within their family learns better in school</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cluster Mean and Standard deviation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cluster Mean and Standard deviation</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SD = Standard Deviation of respondents
Data in Table 3 showed that all the 5 items had their mean values ranged from 3.10 to 3.57 which were above the cutoff point of 2.50. This showed that the respondents agreed that all the 5 items shows the effect of teachers’ qualification on student academic performance.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Influence of Teachers’ Qualification on Student Academic Performance (N = 399)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Students who are taught by trained professional teachers perform better than those untrained professional teachers</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Indiscipline among teachers results to retarding students’ academic performance.</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teacher’s effective use of instructional material affect the academic performance of student</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Students who see teachers as role model perform better than those see nothing good in their teacher.</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Effective discipline by teachers in school result to good academic achievement</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cluster mean and Standard deviation</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.34</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.62</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion of Findings

Table 1 shows that all the items had their mean value above average means score of 2.50 which indicate that respondents agreed that school facilities influences the academic performance of secondary school students in Makurdi metropolis. The respondents as shown in table 1, all agreed that school facilities affects student’s academic performance. This finding is in consonance with the opinion of Hallak in Odeh (2015) who states that facilities form one of the potent factors that contribute to academic achievement of students in the school system. They include the school buildings, classroom, accommodation, libraries, laboratories, furniture, recreational equipment, apparatus and other instructional materials. He went further to say that
their availability, relevance and adequacy contribute to academic achievement of students. He however, quickly added that unattractive school buildings and overcrowded classrooms among others contribute to poor academic achievement of the students in secondary and other levels of education.

This is also in line with Afolabi A.O (2005) who found that students with a good learning environment background performed better than their counterparts with poor environmental background.

Table 2 shows that all the items had their mean values below average means score of 2.50 which indicates that all the respondents agreed that home environment influences academic performance of secondary school students in Makurdi metropolis. The respondents as shown in table 2 have all agreed that home environment affects academic performance of student.

This finding agrees with the views of Megan (2002:78), whose “research on student in high-risk urban environments indicates that a positive, supportive, and culturally conscious school climate can significantly shape the degree of academic success experienced by urban students”. This also agrees with Ogunlade (1973) in Asma et al., who opined that home environment has considerable influence on pupil’s school achievement.

Table 3 shows that all the items had their values above average means score of 2.50 which indicates that all the respondents agreed that teachers’ qualification influences academic performance of secondary school students in Makurdi metropolis. This finding agrees with the views of Okeke (2004) who state that indiscipline among teachers are their acts of behaviour that affects effective teaching and learning as well as result to retarding students’ academic achievement. Common indiscipline behaviour by teachers include; absenteeism from school and
lesson, lateness, non-preparation of lesson notes, failure to mark students exercise books, non-completion of school records such as diaries, registers, student results, involvement in examination malpractices, illegal collection from parent and students, unapproved study leave with pay, drinking, drug taking and sexual immorality. These are serious threat to students’ academic achievement, because teachers are the expected professionals, entrusted with the responsibility to conserve the future and destiny of the students as well as the nation. This is also in congruent with Charles (2007) who maintains that teachers’ unpreparedness is seen in the performance of students.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In accordance with all the information, facts and findings as shown by the result and data analysis of the study, it is imperative to conclude that learning environment influences the performance of students. This implies that if a school is well equipped with necessary facilities and has qualified teachers student’s academic performance is sure to improve. Home environment also influence academic performance of student.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made to be implemented if there must be drastic improvement in students’ academic performance.

1. Benue State Government should provide adequate school facilities in secondary schools to enhance teaching and learning processes. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA), philanthropist and other charitable organizations are also implored to compliment the effort of the government to boost academic achievement of secondary school students by contributing to modern learning infrastructures to schools.
2. Parents or guardians should provide comfortable learning environment for secondary school students at home. Such environment should be safe and well planned to encourage learning.

3. School authorities should ensure that only qualified and well trained teachers are employed because indiscipline among teachers can jeopardize students’ academic achievement.

References


Ochefu, J.A. Sambe, A.M. Adejo (Eds.), *Benue State in Perspective*; Makurdi: Aboki Publishers.


