

***Teachers' perception of the influence of School Environmental factors on academic performance of secondary school students in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State***

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**Abstract**

*The study examined the perception of teachers on the influence of environmental factors on academic performance of secondary school students in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State. Descriptive survey research design was employed in the study. The total population of the study was 1,829 teachers with a sample of 344 teachers. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher developed questionnaire titled “Environmental Factors Influencing Academic Performance of Secondary School Students Questionnaire (EFIAPSSSQ)”. The questionnaire was validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation from National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). Reliability of the sets of items of the instrument yielded a coefficient of 0.73 using Cronbach Alpha. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The study revealed that positive, supportive and culturally conscious school environment can influence the performance of students. The study concluded that there are several environmental factors that could influence students' academic performance in secondary school. Recommendations were made that schools should be strategically located to positively influence academic performance of students and regulatory bodies should take into account various environmental factors before granting approval to any structure at school at any level.*

**Keywords:** School, Environmental, factors, academic, performance

**Introduction**

Environmental influence has continued to be one of the major factors affecting academic performance of students in secondary schools which has fueled much interest and attention in educational discourse and consideration. Over the past decades, remarkable studies have indicated a correlation between the environment and academic performance of students in secondary school. According to Orlu (2013), the environment plays a major role in the life of every individual, whether students, teachers, employers or employees. Some factors that affect academic performances of students include sitting of schools, inadequate facilities, poor ventilation etc. Many schools have no light, inadequate facilities, dilapidated building and no ventilation. Under these conditions, the health of students and teachers, according to Arul (2012),

may be adversely affected, which will in turn reflect on students' academic performance. Therefore, for the students to carry his learning effectively and efficiently, it is necessary that learning takes place in a conducive environment. Studies have shown that environmental factors, to a large extent, affect the both the physical and psychological potentials of an individual. This has led to the contention that many students fail to develop their potentials due to inadequate environmental stimulation. Sunday (2012) noted that a conducive environment enhances a child's growth and development. Children feel happy in a peaceful and friendly environment whereas schools sited in noisy urban streets are associated with deficits in mental concentration leading to student's poor performance.

According to Iwuagwu (2016), to achieve the goals of secondary education, the environment has to be conducive for learning. She posits that education thrives well only if there is good learning environment to assist students to get the necessary information at each stage of learning. The environment constitutes an important aspect of the learning process. It creates the needed conditions for effectiveness of teaching and learning. Among the environmental factors mentioned by Iwuagwu (2016) are classroom, school location, school facility, school climate, home background and technology influence. Chukwudi (2013) in Obeta (2014) discovered that individual differences in academic performance have been linked to differences in intelligence and personality. He explained that students with higher mental abilities as demonstrated by Intelligent Quotient (IQ) test and those who are higher in conscientiousness (linked to effort and achievement motivation) tend to achieve highly in academic achievement. He states further that a number of factors contribute to both early and later academic achievements. He discovered that some factors can either influence or hinder the academic performance of students at any level of education. He identified such factors as the school environment, curriculum planning and implementation, siblings/peer group influence, home environments like parents, socialization patterns in the home, location of the home, modern gadgets at home among others. He explained that parents influence their children through the environment and discourse parents have with their children. It is pertinent to say here that through the social economic status of parents, the academic performance of students can be greatly affected. Furthermore, Ezeaku (2014) stated that parents of all classes realized the importance of education. He pointed out that families create different environment that influence their children's growth intellectually and enhance motivation in different ways. The inference that can be drawn from here is that parental influence is a major environmental factor that can affect academic performance of students.

It has also been argued that students' performance is affected by the standard and type of school they attend. The environment of the institution a child attends dictates the learning outcomes. In the same vein, Sparkes (1999) indicated that school environment and teachers' expectations from their students have strong influence on students'

performance. They stressed that teachers working in poor schools or schools with inadequate basic amenities often have low performance. Mushtaq and Khan (2012) highlighted that there are two types of factors that affect students' academic performance. They mentioned internal and external classroom factors and asserted that these factors affect the academic performance of students greatly. They mentioned such factors like class schedules, class size, learning facilities, homework, environment of the class, teachers' mastery of technology used in the class and exam systems adopted as part of internal classroom factors. External classroom factors include extracurricular activities, family problems, financial, social and other life challenges.

Teachers' perception of influence of environment and their role with regards to students' performance and their barriers to helping students is important to their success. There is a clear connection between school environment and academic performance. Teachers' perception of influence of school environment encompasses their ability to be culturally sensitive, creating awareness and working with the students and making sure they are receiving the best help available (Adanna, Mgboro & Patrick (2018).

The researcher therefore, sought to investigate teachers perception of influence of school environment in a bid to finding out if the schools are well equipped with instructional tools and conducive atmosphere for effective teaching and learning and linking finding to the psycho-educational implication associated with learning and adjustment outcome.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. How do environmental factors influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone?
2. How does school location influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone?

### **Methodology**

Descriptive survey research design was employed in the study. Nworgu (2006) described descriptive survey as a study which aims at collecting data and describing in a systematic manner, the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. The study was conducted in all secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone. Ikom Education zone has a total population of 1829 teachers in 86 public secondary schools in the education zone. Teachers are the participants in this study as they were selected as respondents for the questionnaire. To get the sample, four (4) teachers from each of the 86 secondary schools were sampled as respondents, giving rise to 344 teachers from a population of 1,829 teachers. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher developed questionnaire titled "Environmental Factors Influencing Academic Performance of Secondary School Students Questionnaire (EFIAPSSSQ)". The

instrument has two sections namely: section “A” which is concerned with personal data of the respondents and section “B” which contains 20 items in two clusters on environmental factors influencing academic performance of secondary school students in Ikom Education zone of Cross River State. The instrument has 10 items that has two clusters with rating scale using Likert type rating of four point scale. The response mode applied were Strongly Agree (SA) 4 Points, Agree (A) 3 Points, Disagree (D) 2 Points, Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 Point. In order to ensure the internal consistency of the instrument, a trial test was carried out on ten (10) teachers which gave the internal consistency reliability for each of the cluster which was computed using Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) with an overall computation that yielded a reliability index of 0.82. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. A score of 2.50 and above was taken to mean that the respondent is in agreement with the option while a mean score of 2.49 and below showed disagreement to the items of the instrument.

**Presentation of results**

**Research question 1:** How do environmental factors influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone?

**Table 1:** Mean Responses of male and female Teachers on influence of environmental

S/ N	Item Description	Male n = 202			Female n = 142		
		$\bar{x}$	SD <sub>1</sub>	DEC <sub>1</sub>	$\bar{x}$	SD <sub>2</sub>	DEC <sub>2</sub>
1.	Climatic and other environmental situation in the school can affect students' academic performance	3.57	0.64	Agree	3.75	0.58	Agree
2.	There is a correlation between the general environment of a school and academic performance of students	3.39	0.72	Agree	3.20	0.55	Agree
3.	Dilapidated school facilities can affect students' academic performance in secondary school	3.23	0.71	Agree	3.20	0.96	Agree

4.	Lack of adequate technological teaching and learning facilities affects students' performance	2.98	0.87	Disagree	2.71	0.95	Agree
5	Lack of Test tubes and conical flasks which are basic apparatus required for practical teaching of science subjects affects students' academic performance	3.44	0.66	Agree	3.44	0.68	Agree
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>2.92</b>	<b>0.62</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>2.80</b>	<b>0.36</b>	<b>Agree</b>

factors on students' academic performance

The result in Table 1 showed that items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 were accepted because they have mean values above the criterion value of 2.50. Furthermore, the grand mean of 2.92 and 2.80 are also above 2.50, hence, the respondents perceived that there are certain environmental factors that influence academic performance of secondary school students in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State.

**Research question 2:** How does school location influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone?

**Table 2:** Mean Responses of male and female Teachers on influence of school location

S/N	Item Description	Male			Female		
		$\bar{x}$	SD <sub>1</sub>	DEC <sub>1</sub>	$\bar{x}$	SD <sub>2</sub>	DEC <sub>2</sub>
		<b>n = 202</b>			<b>n = 142</b>		
6.	School in urban areas have the tendency to have better academic performance than those located in rural areas	3.36	0.66	Agree	3.04	0.90	Agree
7.	School location (whether rural or urban) can affect students' performance	3.43	0.64	Agree	3.44	0.70	Agree

8.	Children who live with their parents in the urban areas perform academically better	3.16	0.75	Agree	3.03	0.88	Agree
9.	Children who do not live with their parents in the urban areas do not perform well academically	3.14	0.63	Agree	2.93	0.92	Agree
10.	Schools in rural areas lack basic facilities which further influences the students' academic performance negatively.	2.76	0.76	Agree	3.01	0.80	Agree
<b>Overall Mean</b>		<b>3.22</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>2.98</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>Agree</b>

on students' academic performance

The result in Table 2 showed that items 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 were accepted because they have mean values above the limiting value of 2.50. However, the grand mean of 3.22 and 2.98 is above 2.50, hence, the respondents perceived that the location where a school is cited greatly influences students' academic performance in secondary Schools in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State.

### **Discussion of the findings**

Research question 1 sought to find out how the environment influences academic performance of students in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State. From the findings, respondents perceived that the type of environment students are exposed to, for teaching and learning process, greatly influences their academic performance either negatively or positively. This is in line with assertion of Iwuagwu (2016) who maintained that the environment has to be conducive for learning. He posited that education thrives well only if there is good environment to assist students get the necessary information at each stage of learning. The environment constitutes an important aspect of learning process. It creates the needed condition for effectiveness of teaching and learning. Some unhealthy environmental conditions that exist in secondary schools which affect academic performances of students include location of schools, inadequate facilities, poor ventilation etc. Many schools have no light, insufficient facilities, dilapidated buildings with poor ventilation. All these challenges contribute to the poor performance of students.

Finding from research question 2 revealed that school location influences academic performance of students in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State. Arul (2012) posited that the location a school is sited may adversely affect students' academic

performance due to lack of facilities and resources which in turn reflects on students' academic performance. Therefore, for the student to carry his learning effectively and efficiently, it is necessary that learning is made effective and human resources made adequately available for effective teaching and learning.

### **Conclusion**

They are several environmental factors that could influence students' academic performance in secondary school. These factors could be lack of facilities, dilapidated buildings, lack of instructional materials, low morale of teachers, etc. These factors sum up to make the school environment. It is then required that government, NGO's and other stakeholders, put their hands on desk to make adequate provision of both human and material resources for effective teaching and learning that will enhance better academic performance of students in secondary school.

### **Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings and conclusion enumerated above, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Schools should be strategically located to positively influence academic performance of students.
2. Regulatory bodies should take into account various environmental factors before granting approval to any structure at school at any level.
3. The government of Cross River State should enforce strict adherence to environmental rules that can promote good learning by all school proprietors.
4. Since it has been established that parents have a significant role to play in the academic performance of their children, deliberate efforts should be made to enlighten parents about their role in enhancing the academic performance of their children. In this wise, it is thought that the Parents/Teachers' Association which exists in almost all schools should be strengthened as an enlightenment platform for the role of parents in the education of their children.

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