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SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AND THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OBIO/AKPOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE

Ifeanyichukwu Emmanuel NWABUEZE

Department of Educational Management

Faculty of Education

University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria

ifeanyi.nwabueze@uniport.edu.ng

Faith Ifeanyichukwu NWABUEZE

Department of Educational Management

Faculty of Education

University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria

faithnwabs@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of 840 SS3 students in 28 public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. A sample size of 140 was realized through Quota sampling technique. A self-structured questionnaire titled: School Environment and Academic Success Questionnaire (SEASQ) was used to elicit response from the respondents. The instrument which was reliable at the coefficient of 0.78 was validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation. Mean and rank order statistics were used to answer the research questions. The findings revealed that leaking roofs, to a very high extent affect the academic performance of students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area and strategies to improve the learning condition are adequate funding and maintenance of the school plant. Therefore, it is recommended that the government should expedite action in the maintenance of the school plant.

Keywords: School, Environment, Academic, Success, Public Senior, Secondary School, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

The environment make up of any given school is one of the basic determinants of the performance of students. The school is an official institution and a true engine for a nation's progress. It consists of students, teachers, and school administrators or heads. Every day, they get together to form a group of individuals that interact constantly in a school setting that aims to impart social values. Given these principles, education today must equip students to be productive adults. However, because of a number of issues, including inadequate upkeep of school facilities, a lack of funding for infrastructural development, and many more, Nigerian schools are the least equipped to handle the deluge of new knowledge and practices that are being added on a daily basis.

According to Tapia-Fonllem (2020), School environment is the relationship that exists amongst members of school community. It draws attention to teaching and learning. One of the major facets of school administration is school building, which refers to all of the material provisions in a school environment. School maintenance, on the other hand, involves taking the necessary care of all the facilities used in the school. School building is the school site and all of the essential structures, both permanent and semi-permanent, such as roofs, machines, laboratory equipment and chalkboards that are necessary for effective teaching and learning. School environment is the space interpretation of the school curriculum; in this case, the curriculum cannot be implemented without the physical facilities needed for teaching and learning, which are either unavailable or not adequately provided and maintained. Harshita (2024) defined school environment as the social and physical space where teaching and learning is carried out.

Types of School Environment

Social environment are made up of:

- School culture;
- Peer relationship;
- Teacher-student relationship;
- Teacher-teacher relationship; and
- Student-student relationship

Physical environment:

- Safety measures;
- Classroom designs; and
- School facilities

A well-maintained school environment is thought to prepare students for the intended educational objectives that would support efficient teaching and learning procedures and their academic success. Oluchukwu in Ebimuna (2021) emphasized the impact of school plant maintenance on students' academic performance and said that school plant planning and maintenance, including school buildings, classrooms, libraries, and laboratories, are crucial components of educational planning. Inadequate maintenance of school facilities makes it impossible for them to be used to their full potential, which could prevent effective teaching and

learning. Adequate learning environment gives children and teachers a location of mental and bodily wellbeing and improves the quantity and quality of education. Learning environment improves school programmes and meets community needs.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria and Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, to be specific, many secondary schools are planted at various places by private individuals, government, corporate and religious organizations. Thus, the process of teaching and learning takes place under different environment. Every school possesses different kinds of facilities and classroom structures at divergent functional levels. All the students are expected to sit for the same examination, at the final year of their senior secondary school education. It is therefore expected to have similar performance from all students since they were taught with the same curriculum and syllabus. In reality, some students in some schools perform better than their counterparts in other schools. This indicates that there are definite determinants that influence the academic performance of these students. A particular example of such definite determinant is the learning environment. Students taught in schools with good and enhanced learning environment tend to perform better academically than their peers taught in an uncomfortable learning environment. It is against this backdrop that this study intends to examine school environment and the academic success of public senior secondary school student in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine school environment and the academic success of public Senior Secondary School Students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. Specifically, the study sought to:

- Determine the extent to which leaking roof affects the academic success of public senior secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area;
- Ascertain how open windows affects teaching and learning in public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area; and
- Identify strategies for improving the conditions of school environment for students' academic success in public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpo Local Government Area.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study are as follows:

- To what extent does leaking roof affect the academic success of public senior secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area?
- How does open windows affect teaching and learning in public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area?
- What are the strategies for improving the conditions of learning environment for students' academic success in public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of 840 SS3 students in 28 public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local government Area of Rivers State. A sample size of 140 was realized through Quota sampling technique. The Quota sampling technique was adopted to allocate a specific number to respondents in each of the schools. The quota allocated to each school was 5 respondents multiplied by 28 public senior secondary schools. A self-structured questionnaire titled: School Environment and Academic Success Questionnaire (SEASQ) was used to elicit response from the respondents. The instrument was validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation. An index of 0.81 was realised after a reliability test was conducted. Mean and rank order statistics were used to answer the research questions.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: what extent does leaking roof affect the academic success of public senior secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean response of the extent leaking roof affect the academic success of public senior secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State

S/N	Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	Rank	Remark
1.	Disarray in the classroom	73	56	10	1	3.43	2 nd	Agree
2.	Restriction of mobility to distinct area of the classroom whenever it rains.	41	51	29	17	2.85	5 th	Agree
3.	Dilapidation classroom fixtures	95	43	2	0	3.66	1 st	Agree
4.	Reduced attendance to classes.	38	36	35	34	2.92	4 th	Agree
5.	Disruption of the teaching and learning process	42	71	19	8	3.05	3 rd	Agree
Average Mean						3.18		Agree

Scale: 1.00 – 1.79, Very Low Extent, 1.80 – 2.49 Low Extent, 2.50 – 3.19 High Extent, 3.20 – 4.00 Very High Extent.

The data on table 1 showed the responses of the extent leaking roofs affect the academic performance of public senior secondary students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. Items 1 and 3 had mean scores within the mean rating scale of 3.20 -4.00 indicating that leaking roof leads to disarray in the classroom and dilapidation of classroom fixtures. Items 2, 4 and 5 had mean scores within the rating scale of 2.50 and 3.19. This showed that, to a very high extent, respondents agreed that restriction of mobility, reduced attendance to school and disruption of teaching and learning process affects academic success of students as a result of leaking roof. With an average mean of 3.18, respondents to a high extent agreed that leaking roofs affect the academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area.

Research Question 2: How does open windows affect teaching and learning in public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area?

Table 2: Mean responses on how open windows affect teaching and learning in public senior secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Rank	Remark
6	Climate condition hampers learning and assimilation	94	38	7	1	3.60	2 nd	Agree
7	Ineffective classroom communication	106	33	1	0	3.75	1 st	Agree
8	Students' indiscipline and deviance behaviour	68	45	20	7	3.24	3 rd	Agree
9.	Distraction during learning	56	51	20	13	3.07	4 th	Agree
Average Mean						3.42		Agree

Scale: 1.00 – 1.79 Strongly Disagree, 1.80 – 2.49 Disagree, 2.50 – 3.19 Agree, 3.20 – 4.00 Strongly Agree.

Data on table 2 showed that item 7 which ranked 1st had a mean score 3.75 which indicate that the respondents strongly agree that ineffective classroom communication which affect students' academic success is influenced by open windows in the classroom learning environment. Item 6 which ranked 2nd had a mean score of 3.60 within the mean rating of 3.20 and 4.00. This implied that respondents strongly agreed that climate condition hampers learning and assimilation by students as a result of open windows. Item 8 with a mean of 3.24 showed that respondents also strongly agreed that indiscipline and deviances are caused by open windows. Item 9 which ranked 4th had a mean score of 3.07 indicating that respondents agreed that there is distraction during learning as a result of open windows in the classroom. With an average mean of 3.42, respondents strongly agreed that open windows affect teaching and learning in senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area.

Research Question 3: What are the strategies of improving the condition of learning environment for students' academic success in public senior secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area?

Table 3: Mean response of strategies of improving the condition of learning environment for students' academic success in public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Rank	Remark
10	Management and maintenance of school material resource	68	70	2	0	3.47	2 nd	Agree
11	Adequate funding and financial management	100	39	1	0	3.71	1 st	Agree
12	Improving supervision and accountability mechanism	47	86	6	1	3.27	4 th	Agree
13	Management of school human resources	73	55	11	3	3.44	3 rd	Agree
Average Mean						3.47		Agree

Scale: 1.00-1.79 Strongly disagreed, 1.80-2.49 Disagreed, 2.50-3.19 Agreed, 3.20-4.00 Strongly agree.

The data on table 4.6 showed that item 11,10,13 and 12 in descending rank order all had mean scores within the mean rating scale of 3.20 and 4.00 indicating that respondents strongly agreed that adequate funding and financial management, management and maintenance of school material resources, management of school human resource and finally, improving supervision and accountability mechanism are the strategies to improve the conditions of learning environments for students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on the analysis and result presented in the above tables, the findings of the study are summarized below:

- Leaking roofs, to a very high extent, affect the academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area and it is reflected in the disruption of teaching/learning process, dilapidation of classroom furniture, poor attendance to classes and disorderliness in classroom.
- The findings revealed that distractions during learning, ineffective class room communication, adverse weather condition which impedes learning and retention are agreed response of how open windows affect teaching and learning in senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area.
- In this finding, the strategies to improve the learning conditions for students' academic performance in senior secondary schools Obio/Akpor Local Government Area are adequate funding and financial management, management and maintenance of school material resources, management of school human resources and improving supervision and accountability mechanism.

DISCUSSION

Effect of leaking roof on the academic success of public senior secondary school students. The first finding of this study revealed that leaking roofs, to a very high extent, affect the academic success of public secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. From the findings it was seen that leaking roof disrupts the teaching and learning process. This is in line with the assertion of DPR Limited (2023) which considered leaking roof as problematic to health and safety of students and staff; can hamper learning and as well lead to destruction of school facilities. A situation where roofs are leaking and windows and doors are broken, neither the teacher nor the students can move freely as expected in the classrooms nor teach and learn comfortably and these affect and reduce students' academic performance drastically. It was also revealed that dilapidation of classroom furniture as a result of leaking roofs affect students' academic performances as well as results in poor attendance to classes and causes disorderliness in the classroom. Studies by Qaiser and Ishtiaq in Bukola et al (2021) opined that physical environment is of a vital role in the achievement of success in any particular activity. It demonstrated a correlation between lighting, leaking roofs and the quality of teaching and learning. A positive school learning environment encourages student attendance and increases academic performance while a negative school learning environment negatively affects academic performance.

Effect of open window on teaching and learning in public senior secondary schools. In this finding, the effects of open windows on teaching and learning in public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area are indicated by the response of the respondents where it was agreed that teaching and learning is affected by ineffective classroom communication caused by open windows. Bullock in Matthew (2023) studied the relationship between facilities and students' achievement found that student perform better in schools that are new or recently renovated compared to older schools. The general condition, age of the building and windows in school environment were positively related to student academic success. It was also noted that one of the major critical issues facing public secondary schools in Nigeria is lack of leaning facilities, open windows and doors of the classroom. Along this line, Hallack in Matthew (2023) noted that facilities were prominent factors in a school system. He avowed that the availability of these facilities contributes immensely to students' academic success while otherwise leads to poor performance. The author asserted that if classrooms are equipped and conducive for learning and moderately controlled, Students receive more individualized attention and interact more with the teacher, teachers have more flexibility to use different instructional approaches, students are more likely to participate in class and become more involved and thus, academic performance is increased. From the finding it was seen that as a result of open windows, adverse weather conditions impede learning and retention. According to Ullah and Usman (2023), who emphasised that both teachers and students benefit from to a large extent from school facilities if made available. School learning facilities actually constitute major determining factor toward ensuring quality education. If not properly managed and maintained, it will have psychological impact on both teachers and students as teachers' qualities will not be fully expressed and students' retention abilities will continue to diminish and general interest in learning decrease.

Strategies for improving the Conditions of Learning for Students' Academic success. This finding revealed the strategies for improve the conditions of learning for students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. The agreed responses are adequate Funding and financial management, management and maintenance of school material resources, management of school human resources and improving supervision and accountability mechanism. Chan-Anteza (2022) accepted that students spend most of their time in the school learning therefore, school environment should be made conducive to enable them excel in their academic pursuit. The effective realization of set goals of an educational institution depends wholly on how effective the physical facility resources are allocated, utilized and managed. School financial plan helps in the coordination of the various units and departments towards the objectives of the school. It encourages judiciousness and heightens economy in the use of materials and also inhibits waste in that it limits costs to specific purposes and limits. Learners feel safer emotionally, socially and physically in schools with enabling teaching and learning environment (Enwezor, 2021). There should be a thorough supervision of instruction and assessment of school facilities, which should be carried out on a regular basis in secondary schools. Schools that prioritise healthy learning fosters academic performance (Noor, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that school environment is pivotal to the academic success of students and their overall wellbeing, as well as, the attainment of

educational objectives. Conducive school environment contributes greatly to education and a key to national development.

Recommendations

Sequel to the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- Government should provide fund for the maintenance of classroom facilities.
- Renovation and reconstruction of school environment should be embarked upon.
- There should be regular supervision and inspection of the school learning environment.

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