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Assessing the Impact of School Environment on Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students in Economics

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Abstract

This study assessed the impact of school environment on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Economics. The researchers adopted survey research design for the study. Two hundred and fifty (250) senior secondary school Economics students were randomly selected for the study. A researchers' designed questionnaire titled School Environment Questionnaire (SEQ) with Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.89 was used to collect data for the study. Also, the senior secondary school student's second term scores were collected with profoma. The researcher used mean and standard deviation to answer research question one, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics was used to test all the four hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance. Finding revealed that there is no significant relationship between school environment and students' academic performance in Economic in senior secondary school in Ilorin ($p\text{-value } 0.981 > 0.05$). Also, the findings revealed that there is no significant relationship between school facilities and students' academic performance in economics in senior secondary school in Ilorin ($p\text{-value } 0.796 > 0.05$). In addition, there is no significant relationship between classroom condition and students' academic performance in economics in senior secondary school in Ilorin ($p\text{-value } 0.734 > 0.05$) and there is no significant relationship between school location and students' academic performance in economics in senior secondary school in Ilorin ($p\text{-value } 0.923 > 0.05$). Based on these findings, it was recommended that conducive learning environment should be created for the students so that they would be able to perform academically. Moreover, schools should be provided with adequate teaching aids, as this will also enhance the academic performance of students in economics

Keywords: Academic Performance, Assessing, Performance, School Environment

Introduction



The school environment is an essential factor to be considered in child's ability to learn. School environment is one of the factors that affect the nature of teaching process and its outcome that in turn may or may not be productive in achieving the desired educational goals and objectives. The efficiency of a school system in achieving its organizational objectives depends on the effectiveness of the various environmental factors to which the components of the system are subject to.

According to Oluchukwu (2000) and Ajayi (2001), the school environment which include the classroom, libraries, technical workshops, laboratories, teacher's quality, school management, teaching methods, peers etc. are variables that affect student's academic performance. Hence, the school environment remains an important area that should be managed and well-studied to enhance student's academic performance. The quality of education is not only dependent on the teachers as reflected in the performance of their duties, but also in the effective co-ordination of the school environment (Ajao, 2001). Stewart (1990) he defined school environment as an atmospheric environment built by the inhabitants of the school, perceived differently, depending perhaps on their status within the institution, but affecting them all and communicated to observe. Thomas (1980) defined school environment as the general conditions pervading in the entire school as perceived by the students, teachers and principals. To him, it is the organizational characteristics of the school as a community. These characteristics includes; interpersonal relationship, decision making, communication structure, sensitivity to teacher's problems, attitudes, values and morals of the entire school.

Some of the environmental factors that militate against academic performance of students in economics are non-availability of school facilities such as chairs, tables, good library, teaching aids, textbooks etc, school location, school size and class size, dilapidated building and poor indoor ventilation. According to Evans and Matiu (1991), this factor may be affecting physical health of children because the dilapidated building has been found to exhibit clear signs of sensory irritation, skin rashes and mental fatigue, and all these factors have been found capable of reducing the ability of students to perform very well. (Ogbeifum and Olisa, 2001).

In the school setting, students' performance in economics plays a significant role in the economic, agricultural, industrial and commercial growth of the country. This can be seen from the role at which the developed countries are dictating the pace of Nigerian economic development through their various instruments and organizations. Economics is a science, which studies human behaviour in relationship with scarce means, which have alternative uses. This particular aspect of study contributed a lot to the development of mankind starting from the era of Stone Age to the present technological age. Economics is interesting as it has quickly gained popularity and acceptance among parents, teachers and students (Obemeata, 1980).

According to Adu (2002), the study of Economics serves a useful purpose in modern life. It gives us facts and shows us what may be expected to be the outcome of certain lines of conduct; it helps us to decide which of several alternatives to choose. It charged its recipient to make wise choice that will satisfy their needs in the presence of unlimited wants and resources.

However, despite the importance of economics both to the literate and illiterates, its study at the lower and higher levels of education has not been encouraging. It has been observed that students' performance in Economics is not so encouraging and students find it difficult to pass Economics. Poor academic performance at the senior secondary level of education particularly at the terminal stage has been a serious problem in the education sector. For instance, research evidences abound that immediately after independence in 1960, only

32.36% passed at West African School Certification Examination at the five-credit level and it dropped in subsequent years. In year 2001 and 2002 in the early years of National Examination council (NECO), the results of students in Economics are as reported below:

Table 1: National Examination Council (NECO) Results for 2001 and 2002

Years	2001			2002		
Subject	Credit	Pass	Fail	Credit	Pass	Fail
Economics	54.00	23.50	22.50	48.52	29.22	22.26

Source: Ojerinde 2002 p. 18

The public's unhappiness becomes more prominent, following the annual release of the West African Senior School Certificate Examination results. Students' outcomes do not match the government and parental investment. All stakeholders are concerned about why the system is turning out graduates with poor results. Ogunsaju (2004), states that the academic standard in all Nigerian educational institutions has fallen considerably below societal expectations. Among the reasons for this downward trend in achievement of students in Economics are the various effects the environment and poor teaching has on students. Previous studies have investigated the relationship of poor school environment including problems with student-teacher ratio, school location, school population, classroom ventilation, poor lightning in classroom and inconsistent temperatures in classrooms with students health problems, student behaviour and student achievement. (Crandell and Smaldino, 2000; Davis, 2001; Johnson, 2001; Lyons, 2001; Moore, 2002; Stricherz, 2000; Tanner, 2000).

To blame teachers and poor teaching method might not be adequate in explaining the poor performance in Economics. This research aims to examine some of the aforementioned areas of school environment as it affects students' performance in economics in senior secondary schools in Ilorin, Nigeria. However, this study is focus on the impact of school environment on academic performance of senior secondary school students in economics in Ilorin, Nigeria. it may be worthwhile to survey some environmental factors that has hampered students from performing well in Economics. In this regard, the researcher will consider it worthwhile to make some researches on the performance of students in Economics in Ilorin, Nigeria.

Purpose of Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship that exists between the school environment and academic performance in economics among senior secondary schools in Ilorin, Nigeria. Specifically, the researcher is interested in examining:

1. general academic performance of senior secondary school students in economics
2. relationship between school environment and students academic performance in economics in senior secondary schools in Ilorin, Nigeria.
3. impact of school facilities on the academic performance of students in economics in senior secondary schools in Ilorin, Nigeria.



4. How classroom condition that have been perceived to promote or inhibit students learning influence students academic performance in economics in senior secondary schools in Ilorin, Nigeria?
5. How school location affects students' academic performance in economics in senior secondary schools in Ilorin, Nigeria?

Research Questions

One research question was formulated for this study:

1. What is the general academic performance of senior secondary school students in economics?

Null Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated for this study:

1. There is no significant relationship between the school environment and students academic performance in economics in senior secondary schools in Ilorin, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between school facilities and students academic performance in economics in senior secondary schools in Ilorin, Nigeria.
3. There is no significant relationship between classroom condition and students' academic performance in economics in senior secondary schools in Ilorin, Nigeria.
4. There is no significant relationship between school location and students academic performance in economics in secondary schools in Ilorin, Nigeria.

Methodology

Survey design was adopted for this study. According to Adegboye (2001), descriptive research method is basic for all type of research in investigating the extent to which variation in one or more factors could influence others. According to Sheu (1999) a descriptive design attempts to describe, find out and interprets conditions, relationship that exist or the attitudes of people or events or the attitude of people towards events and ideas, the trends that are developing and so forth. The population for this study consists of all the senior secondary schools in Ilorin, Nigeria. There are twenty (20) schools in Ilorin south local government, twenty (25) in Ilorin east and twenty four (24) in Ilorin west (state ministry of education 2012). Thus, two (2) schools each were selected from Ilorin south and west and one (1) were selected from Ilorin east local government comprising of five (5) schools in total by the use of simple random sampling. The target population consists of SS2 students that offer economics. There are five thousand, two hundred and seventy five (5,275) SS2 students in Ilorin south, five thousand, six hundred and twenty six (5,626) SS2 students in Ilorin west and four thousand, four hundred and seven (4,407) SS2 students in Ilorin east local government totaling the number of SS2 students in Ilorin to fifteen thousand, three hundred and eight (15,308). Fifty (50) students were selected from each secondary schools comprising of two hundred and fifty (250) students as a whole. Purposive random sampling technique was used mainly in S.S.S. II due to their level and exposure to the rudiments and elements of critical economics concepts.

The instrument used for this research is a researcher-designed questionnaire titled School Environment Questionnaire (SEQ). Also, the senior secondary school student's second term scores were collected with profoma. SEQ consisted of section A and section B. Section A includes information about the respondents biographical data, which include school, gender, age range among others while Section B contained questions relating to effect of school environment has on the academic performance of the respondents. The respondents are to respond to the questions in the questionnaire by ticking the space provided. The 4- point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly

Disagree (SA) was used. Expert judgment was used in validating the instrument. A Cronbach's Alpha reliability co-efficient of 0.89 was obtained for the instrument.

The researcher used mean and standard deviation to answer research question one, while Pearson product moment correlation statistics was used to test all the four hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the general academic performance of SSS students in Ilorin in Economics?

The minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation of respondents' T-scores in Economics were calculated as shown in Table 3

Table 1: Minimum, Maximum, Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents' Scores in Economics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Scores	250	15	86	50.0211	10.01969

Table 1 revealed 15 and 86 as students' least and highest score in Economics in Ilorin respective and 50.0211 indicates that students perform slightly above average in Economics in Ilorin.

Null Hypotheses Testing

In this study four (4) null hypothesis were formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significance relationship between school environment and students' academic performance in Economics in Senior Secondary School in Ilorin. Students' responses on School facilities, classroom condition, and school location were summed (school environment) and correlated with their T-scores in Economics using Pearson r

Table 2: Relationship between School Environment and Students' Academic Performance

Variables	N	Cal r	p-value	Decision
School Environment	250	.001	.981	Accepted
Academic Performance	250			

Table 2 above revealed no significant relationship between school environment and students' academic performance in Economics in Senior Secondary School in Ilorin because the p-value (0.981) is greater than 0.05 alpha level ($0.981 > 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis one is accepted. An extremely low correlation coefficient (r) of school environment and students academic performance (0.001) is an evidence of the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

Null Hypothesis 2: there is no significant relationship between school facilities and students' academic performance in Economics in Senior Secondary School in Ilorin.
Students' responses on School facilities were summed and correlated with their T-scores in Economics using Pearson r

Table 3: Relationship between School Facilities and Students' Academic Performance

Variables	N	Cal r	p-value	Decision
School Environment	250			
		.016	.796	Accepted
Academic Performance	250			

Table 3 above revealed no significant relationship between school environment and students' academic performance in Economics in Senior Secondary School in Ilorin because the p-value (0.796) is greater than 0.05 alpha level ($0.796 > 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis two is accepted. A very low correlation coefficient (r) of school environment and students academic performance (0.016) is an evidence of the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

Null Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between classroom condition and students' academic performance in Economics in Senior Secondary School in Ilorin
Students' responses on classroom condition were summed and correlated with T-score in Economics using Pearson r

Table 4: Relationship between Classroom and Students' Academic

Variables	N	Cal r	p-value	Decision
School Environment	250			
		.022	.734	Accepted
Academic Performance	250			

Table 4 above revealed no significant relationship between classroom condition and students' academic performance in Economics in Senior Secondary School Ilorin because the p-value (0.734) is greater than 0.05 alpha level ($0.734 > 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis three is accepted. A low correlation coefficient (r) of school environment and students academic performance (0.022) is an evidence of the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

Null Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between school location and students' academic performance in Economics in Senior Secondary School in Ilorin.
Students' response on school location were summed and correlated with their T-scores in Economics using Pearson r

Table 5: Relationship between School Location and Students' Academic Performance

Variables	N	Cal r	p-value	Decision
School Environment	250			
		.006	.923	Accepted
Academic Performance	250			

Table 5 above revealed no significant relationship between school location and students' academic performance in Economics in Senior Secondary School in Ilorin because the p-value (0.923) is greater than 0.05 alpha level ($0.923 > 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis four is accepted. A very low correlation coefficient (r) of school environment and students academic performance (0.006) is an evidence of the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

Discussion of the Findings

This study analysed the effects of school environment on the academic performance of Senior Secondary School Students' in Economics in Ilorin Nigeria.

Finding revealed that senior secondary Economics students performed averagely.

Finding revealed that there is no significant relationship between school environment and students' academic performance in Economic in senior secondary school in Ilorin. This finding is in disagreement with that of Ibitoye (2003) found out there is significant relationship between environment and academic performance of secondary school students. Yusuf (2014) also found out that there was a significant relationship environmental factors and academic performance in Ibadan North.

Finding revealed that there is no significant relationship between school facilities and students' academic performance in economics in senior secondary school in Ilorin. The finding of this study is in disagreement with that of Oshodi (1991) who study resource, utilization, and students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools and found out that the resource utilization was the most important determinant of students' academic performance in secondary schools. Owioye (2000) found out that school facilities were found to be the most potent determinant of academic achievement in SSCE when taken together.

Contrary to this, Iyamu (2005) contended that the provision of all these factors may not have significant impact on successful learning if the learners are not exposed to competent principals, teachers and other school teams.

Finding also revealed that there is no significant relationship between classroom condition and students' academic performance in economics in senior secondary school in Ilorin. This study against the finding of Lefgren (2006) found a positive correlation between class size and students' academic performance of secondary schools in Oyo State. Also, Yusuf (2014) there was a significant relationship between class size and academic performance of secondary school students.

Finding revealed that is no significant relationship between school location and students' academic performance in economics in senior secondary school in Ilorin. This finding is in disagreement with the finding of Yusuf (2014) who found out that there was a significant relationship between school location and academic performance of secondary school students.

Conclusions

Finding revealed that senior secondary Economics students performed averagely. Finding revealed that there is no significant relationship between school environment and students' academic performance in Economic in senior secondary school in Ilorin. Finding revealed that there is no significant relationship between school facilities and students' academic performance in economics in senior secondary school in Ilorin. Finding also revealed that there is no significant relationship between classroom condition and students' academic performance in economics in senior secondary school in Ilorin. Finally, finding revealed that is no significant relationship between school location and students' academic performance in economics in senior secondary school in Ilorin.



Recommendations

In view of the findings above, the following recommendations are made in order to ensure students perform more than average in economics.

1. Conducive learning environment should be created for the students so that they would be able to perform academically.
2. The school should be provided with adequate teaching aids, as this will also enhance the academic performance of students in economics.
3. The school administrators should also encourage student – teacher interpersonal relationship as this will bridge communication gap between students and their teachers and this will in turn enhance the academic performance of students.
4. Government and school proprietors should endeavor to produce adequate school facilities for schools in order to encourage students to learn and improve academically.
5. The school administrators should also endeavour to regulate the number of students per class and should try to follow the student- teacher ratio as stated by the national policy on education.

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