

School Related Variables and Students' Academic Performance in Secondary School in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

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Abstract: *This study focused on school related variables and students academic performance in secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State. Two specific purpose were formulated to give guide to the study which was in line with the research questions and hypothesis. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. This study was conducted in Abakaliki Education zone, out of the three education zones in Ebonyi State. The population of this study comprised all the 1915 teachers in the public secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State. The sample of the study comprised of 405 teachers. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: School related variable and student academic performance in Secondary Schools Question (SRVSAPSSQ). Three experts, one from Measurement and Evaluation Unit of Science. Department and two from the Department of Educational Foundations Administration/Planning, Ebonyi State University Abakaliki validated the instrument. The internal consistency of the instrument was computed using Cronbach Alpha. The overall reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.87. Instrument for data collection was statistical mean and standard deviation. Based on the analysis the study found among other things that school personnel and school environment influence students academic performance in secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State. Following the findings the study recommended that qualified personnel with effective propensity should be vehemently recruited into the system, and teachers should maintain absolute relationship with students for effective teaching and learning to takes place.*

Keywords: *Education, Teachers, Variables, School Variable School Personnel, School Environment*

I. Introduction

Education being the key to national development and technological advancement of any nation has the teacher at the center. The teacher is the person to whom the society delegates the education of its youths. The teacher is specially selected, trained and educated for the job of dispensing knowledge to others according to their needs and capabilities. He engages in interactive behaviour with the learners for the purpose of effecting a change in the learner. The teacher does this by guiding the learners through planned activities, so that they may acquire the richest learning possible from their experiences, [1].

Teaching is not the sole job of the teacher, but represents one major aspect of the teacher's responsibility. Apart from instructional process, he is also a motivator, moderator, guidance counsellor and supervisor of learning. In an ever-changing society with developments in all human endeavours, culture and value system, the teacher is the one who is at the hub of the activities, nurturing, and transforming, translating, adapting, improving and interpreting new ideas, to create social harmony. Hence [2] defined a teacher as one whose profession is, or whose talent is the ability to impart knowledge, practical skill or understanding. [3] sees the teacher as an expert in some areas of knowledge and skills, as well as agent of social change. As an agent of social change, he is at the centre of knowledge and frontiers of new findings, be it scientific, technological, social, economic and in all his dealings, his pedagogical training comes to bear. No wonder the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) states that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers. The teacher remains the producer of all other professionals' visa-vis Lawyers, Doctors, Pharmacists, Engineers, Social Scientists, Architects, etc.

The wheel and hub that propel all educational goals, aims and objectives, policies and strategies for successful attainment is the teacher [4]. The teacher is meant to be productive in the field, and without being biased in view of his responsibilities to the schools mostly in the area of teaching economics in the school environment.

School is a social and learning agent that provides the environment upon which a child may be formally educated in order to attain educational goals. Human beings have unlimited capacity to learn, but may however; be limited by the behaviour patterns and faculties that the immediate environment offers. According to [5] nature only provides the raw materials in form of potentials but it is the environment that determines the

extent of development. The child first school is the home, for the child gathers ideas and experience from his parents and siblings who relate with him [6].

The school as the major environment where the learner is transformed to develop his potentials and acquire skills that will help him fit meaningfully into the society which he lives plays an important role in education of the learner. A school is an institution with structure well designed and planned for academic purposes. It has well designed curricula for its activities of learning and the transfer of knowledge is usually done by one who is called the "teacher" while the receiver of the knowledge is called the "learner". During the transfer of the knowledge, we say teaching is taking place, it aims at developing the child's cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains.

Variable is anything that can effect or change the result of study [7]. Every study has variables as these are needed in order to understand differences. Example, students exposed to the work force take a more active role in their education than those who have noexposures. Looking at this, one might see that several obvious variables are at play, including pre-knowledge age. School variables are those factors in the school which we know can affect the outcome of learning experiences. The major variables to be considered in this study include the human resources (school personnel) and school environment (School climate) as they affect students' academic performance.

School variables remain an important area that ought to be looked into addressed properly to enhance the student's academic performance in Nigeria has been of much concern to the government, parents, teachers and even students themselves. The quality of education not only depends on the teachers as reflected in the performance of their duties, but also is the effective coordination of the school variables; it is believed that the school physical features have a form of relationship with the student's academic performance as well as other variables as stated in this study. [8] identified physical facilities, human resources, school climate, teachers quality, and financial resources as the mostly effective school variables. The teaching force in most states secondary schools is not promising. Teachers complain of increased students' teacher ratios; many secondary schools are understaffed. Many school management committees are of the opinion that as a result of the ban of levies, they are unable to recruit extra teachers through the PTAs. In addition, these problems are contributing significantly to high school dropout rates and have seriously affected the inflow of students in secondary education [9]. The performance of education is evaluated based on examinations given and attainments of students in such examinations. Examinations have been accepted by educationists and other stakeholders as an important aspect of any education system [10]. The importance placed on examination has seen stakeholders come up with strategies aimed at improving students' performance in examinations [11].

Human resources in school organization include the principal, teachers, non-teaching staff and the students that offer their services to the school. Without human resources in school organization, educational goals and objectives cannot be attained, because achieving school success is by working with people and working through people. For instance, in educational management, human potentials, individual's capabilities, time and talents must be managed effectively and efficiently in such a way to achieve educational goals and objectives. According to [12], human resources management entails activities and strategies that focus on successfully managing employees at all levels of an organization to achieve organizational goals. In the practice of human resource management in schools, the principals have direct responsibility of managing staff and are concerned importantly with three major categories which include, assessing the staff need, satisfying the staff need, maintaining and improving staff services [13]. [14], [15], [16] state that the functional scope of human resources management (HRM) practices at the school levels, include training, orientation, performance appraisal, motivation, delegation of duties to teachers and supervisors.

In most secondary schools in Ebonyi State, this programme appears neglected, even when it is conducted; it is done haphazardly [17]. Good instructions, job description and job analysis, all give the newly recruited teacher a way to orient himself/herself with what is expected and required of him/her to be successful in the position [18]. Another Human Resource Management practice is the training of teachers. Training as a function of Human Resource Management is concerned with organizational activity, aimed at bettering the performance of individuals and groups in organizational settings (<https://en.wikipedia.org>). A trained teacher according to [19] is more likely to be highly motivated, competent and productive. The essence of training and development becomes more evident as teachers face the problems' of learning new skills and ideas which will help them to maintain proficient level and prepare them for future promotion, [20] maintained that Performance appraisal of staff is another important aspect of human resource management practices that the principals must consider. According to [21] some principals use appraisal as a threat on their teachers instead of using it as a procedure to set standards, assess teacher's standard and provide feedback to the teachers with the hope of motivating them to eliminate performance deficiencies. That is why [22] advised that principals should use appraisal to gain positive achievement for the school.

Though secondary schools within state have same catchment area for students, they record varied results in national examination. Poor supply of these resources leads to low quality attainments as reflected

through examinations results. This study seeks to find out impact of school variable on students' academic performance in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State.

Statement of the Problem

Academic performance which is measured by the examination results is one of the major goals of school. [23] argued that schools are established with the aim of impacting knowledge and skills to those who go through them and behind all this is the idea of enhancing good academic performance. The poor academic performance of students had in the past given a cause for concern for academicians and school operators and those variables that could tend to influence the secondary school student performance. It is pertinent to investigate the composition of school variables on student's academic performance in secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone. Notwithstanding, it is not yet known why some students fail to attain the standard expected of them, the researcher would therefore like to establish the performance of school variables such as school environment and school personnel on student's performances in Abakaliki Education Zone.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to investigate into the influence of school related variables on secondary school students' academic performance in Abakaliki Education zone. Specifically, the study intends:

1. To examine the influence of school personnel on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone.
2. To determine the influence of school academic environment on students' performance in secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone,

Research Questions

The following research questions will be formulated to guide the study:

1. In what ways could school personnel influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone?
2. In what ways could school academic environment influence students' performance in secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses formulated to guide the study and was tested at 0.05 level significance using t-test.

1. There is no significant difference between responses of male and female teachers on how school environment influence secondary school students' academic performance in secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone

Concept of Teaching and Learning

Teaching as defined by [24] is any interpersonal influence which may be exerted by somebody aimed at changing the ways in which other persons can or will behave. Teaching is perceived to be an art and a science [25]. As an art, it represents the traditional role of transmitting specific body of knowledge, beliefs, values, skills etc, to the younger generation, in order to perpetuate the cultural heritage of the society. As a science, teaching can- be seen as an organized knowledge which is applied to solve emerging problems. Since knowledge is organized, systematic, valid and reliable, the science of teaching amounts to organized instruction which places before the teacher, novel and unique challenges. These challenges include arranging, manipulating, adapting and managing the learning environment (classroom) so that any learner placed in that environment (classroom) may learn, [27].

According to [28], this pre-supposes that any human being placed in that environment can be taught to learn something. The achievements of an individual would be an outcome largely of his environment. That is, how the environment of an individual had been manipulated positive or negatively. Teaching is meant to promote learning. Teacher's choice of a particular teaching strategy and classroom management reflects assumptions about the purpose of learning and its outcome in the learner. In its broadest sense teaching defines the process within which learning occurs.

Learning is defined as acquiring, through practice, patterns of behavior that one has not previously carried on, that is, learning through experiencing new ways of thinking, and feeling [29]. And this pre-supposes that any human being placed in that environment can be taught to learn something. The achievements of an individual would be an outcome largely of his environment. That is, how the environment of an individual had been manipulated positively or negatively. Teaching is meant to promote learning. According to [30], teacher's choice of a particular teaching strategy reflects assumptions about the purpose of learning. In its broadest sense, teaching defines the premise within which learning occurs. Learning is defined as acquiring through practice

patterns of behaviour that one has not previously carried on that is learned through experiences, new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting [31].

School Personnel and Academic Performance

Human resource in school includes teachers, support staff and students. Human resource as a factor of production is affected by adequacy and quality as reflected by level of training and level of motivation [32]. According to behavioral scientists, effective worker performance requires motivation ability and reward system that encourages quality work [33]. Performance of teachers as reflected by level of training and teaching experience will determine the quality of grades attained in an examination [34]. A trained teacher will have necessary pedagogical skills which will promote students' understanding, motivating a student to learn, thereby promoting academic performance. Adequacy of teachers is reflected by student-teacher ratio. Student-teacher ratio reflects the number of student that is handled by one teacher in a stream during a lesson [12]. Low student-teacher ratio means that a teacher will be able to handle fewer students implying high attention level. High student-teacher ratio implies that a teacher will be able to handle many students. This will make a teacher to employ teaching methods which are deductive rendering students passive. However, there is need to strike balance as extremely low student-teacher ratio leads to under utilization of teachers while high student-teacher ratio compromises academic performances affecting quality of education. This study therefore seeks to establish the impact of human resource on students' academic performance as reflected by internal and external examination results. Human resource management is viewed as a system of activities and strategies that focus on successfully managing employees at all levels of an organization to achieve organization goals. Human resource management is concerned with recruiting qualified staff for an organization and having got them, look after them so that they will want to stay and secure their jobs. Cuming cited in [27], state that human resources management aims at making the workers put in their best in their job. In like manners school principals should perform relevant management function to achieve this approach. Mathias and Jackson in [8] described human resource management as the design of formal system in an organization to ensure effective and efficient use of human talents to accomplish organizational goals. [33] in his study viewed human resource management as a distinctive approach to organizational management which seeks to achieve comparative advantage through strategic development of a highly committed and capable workforce using an integrated array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques. Suffice to state that human resource management is a set of organizational activities directed at attracting, developing and maintaining effective workforce. Human resource management is an approach to the management of human resources that involves all management decisions and actions that affect the relationship between the school as an organization and employees.

[10] saw human resource management as series of activities in which the job, the individual and the organization all interact [20], affirm that human resource management functions include: staffing which involves job analysis, human resource planning, tasks and responsibilities, skills and qualifications needed to perform a job are identified.

Human resource management constitutes one of the cardinal leadership responsibilities of the school administrator in attaining the objectives of the school in particular and of education in general. Human resources in secondary education inessential in order to get work done. Therefore, all levels of education depend heavily on human resources (teachers) for execution of their programmes. The teacher is a critical resource for effective implementation and realization of the educational objectives at the practical level of the classroom [8]. In all educational institutions, it is the teacher who ultimately interprets and implements policy as deposited in the school curriculum, designed to actualize educational goals. [23] added that maintaining and improving educational standards is only possible through teachers. The teacher therefore, is the most indispensable entity in school organization. He is the greatest aid to learning. Shortage or poor management of teachers reduces the curriculum content that can be delivered effectively [30]. In the schools system, human resource management is essential but not just the ideology of engaging the commitment of staff rather it is the goals of the organization, nor just managing the staff but also shaping the staff, educating them to attain school objectives and at the same time involving staff to participate in decision-making processes that concern them to ensure job satisfaction and goal fulfillments. Consequently, in human resource management, there is need to emphasize on, job satisfaction of teachers and their welfare as well as production effectiveness and efficiency towards the achievement of educational goals. Therefore, human management practices in education does not only emphasize on the process of recruitment, selection, reinforcement like motivation and benefits, labour and organizational relations but also the management of employee's safety and health in an organizations. In conclusion human resource management draws out all the plans and policies that affect workforce and workplace for the achievement of the organizational goals and objectives.

Effective management of human resources aids in the performance of students. In relation, the availability of teaching/learning resources enhances the effectiveness of schools as these are basic things that can bring about good academic performance in the students. [1] opined that all institutions or organization are

made up of human beings (workers) and other non-human resources. He further asserts that when the right quantity and quality of human resources are brought together, they can manipulate other resources towards realizing institutional goals and objectives. Consequently, every institution should strive to attract and retain the best of human resource as help to develop the students academically.

School Environment

Schools are organization and also have climate. School organizational climate has been defined as the "feel of a school [7]. The Organizational Climate is the human environment in which the teachers of a school do their work. Similarly, [18], viewed school organizational climate as the characteristics which describe a particular school, distinguish it from other schools and influence the behaviours of teachers and students, and also the "feel" which teachers and students have for that particular School. Like the air in the room, Climate surrounds and affects everything that happens in an organization [27]. School organizational climate is defined as the way in which organizational members perceived their environment in an attitudinal and value based manner. [9], have also viewed it as an important and influential aspect of satisfaction and retention as well as institutional effectiveness and success in education. As a result of its subjective nature, it can be controlled and manipulated by individual within an organization's decision making mechanism. The school organizational climate is thus greatly influenced by organizational Leadership [24]. Thus, the researcher identifies school climate as groups of people collectively, who through their experiences in working environment build a recommending picture of true organization and that picture is being built through learning how to behave for the survival and progression. [13], highlighted the behavioural views of school climate, as learning and acting through both direct and indirect means. In this line of thought, organizational climate is behavioural and it has two components. The norms which are internalized views of how one should behave and the pattern which are external visible manifestations of internal views.

[21] concluded that how schools are run is directly related to the level of the climate prevalent in schools. For example, schools in which the administrator, teachers and students lack effective communication network and do not work together to solve problems, have lower teacher morale and higher student disorder. Likewise, schools where rules and reward structures are unclear, experience more disorder, schools in which students do not believe they belong and feel uncared for experience high level of disorder. As [29], noted these variables and claims are issues that call for empirical investigations. Organizational Climate of a school has proved to be useful in terms of aligning individual behavior and performance which corporate values, such as reinforcing team behaviours. [5] noted that effective performances of this role require the commitment of all the stakeholders in education such as the parents, students, teachers, administrators, staff and -the community. School

environment strongly influences students academic performance in the organization where there is open climate for the students

II. Methodology

The design employed in the study was a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey design studies are mainly concerned with describing events as they are without any manipulation of what is being observed, [11]. This study was conducted in Abakaliki Education zone, out of the three education zones in Ebonyi State, Abakaliki Education Zone is made up of four local government areas: Abakaliki, Ebonyi, Izzi and Ohaukwu respectively. The population of this study comprised all the 1915 teachers in the 77 public secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State. Source: Planning, Research and Statistics (PRS) Dept: SEB, Abakaliki 201-6/2017 school year. The sample of the study comprised of 405 principals and classroom teachers. To select the sample, the researcher used simple random sampling technique to select from the four local government areas in Abakaliki education zone. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: School related variable and student academic performance in Secondary Schools Question (SRVSAPSSQ). The questionnaire items was structured on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree - SA, Agree = A, Disagree = D, Strongly Disagree = SD with their numerical values assigned as 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

In order to establish the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was face -validated to ensure the appropriateness of the items. Three experts, one from Measurement and Evaluation Unit of Science Department and two from the Department of Educational Foundations Administration/Planning, Ebonyi State University Abakaliki validated the instrument.

In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was administered on forty two respondents in secondary school in Onueke Education Zone of Ebonyi State, which is outside the study area but possesses the same characteristics with the area of the study. The internal consistency of the instrument was computed using Cronbach Alpha. The overall reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.87.

The data collected was analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation for the research questions. The degree of agreement or disagreement was determined by finding the mean of the nominal values assigned to each option. Based on the 4 point rating scale, the mean score of the scale was 2.50. Hypotheses was tested using 't' -test statistics at 0.05 level of significance in the null hypothesis.

III. Results and Discussion

Research Question 1 In what ways could school personnel influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone?

Table 1: Mean Ratings on how school personnel influence students academic performance

S/N	Items Statement	X	SD	Decision
1	Recruitment of non specialist in the teaching hinders students academic performance	2.62	0.94	Accepted
2	Lack of experience teaching personnel affects students academics performance	2.64	0.83	Accepted
3	Lack of effective classroom management by teachers influence students performance	2.61	0.88	Accepted
4	Excess load work on teaching personnel influence academic performance of students	2.59	0.89	Accepted
5	Teachers who go constantly for workshop and seminar influence students' academics performances	2.73	0.82	Accepted
Grand Mean (X)		2.63	0.87	Accepted

The results of data analysis as presented on table 1, it was revealed that recruitment of non specialist in the teaching hinders students academic performance, lack of experience teaching personnel affects students' academic performance, lack of effective classroom management by teachers influence students performance, excess load work on teaching personnel influence academic performance of students and teachers who go constantly for workshop and seminar influence students' academics performances with the mean scores of 2.62, 2.64, 2.61, 2.59 and 2.73 with the standard deviation scores 0.94, 0.83, 0.88, 0.89 and 0.82 respectively.

Research Question Two

In what ways could school academic environment influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone?

Table 2: Mean Ratings on how academic environment influence students academic performance

S/N	Items Statement	X	SD	Decision Rule
6	Teacher-student relationship influence students' academic achievement	2.78	0.71	Accepted
7	Allowing teachers and students help to contribute what happens in the school has an influence	2.74	0.79 0.69	Accepted
8	Administrators setting standards and letting students know these standards influence students	2.77		Accepted
9	Cordial student-peer relationship influences students' academic achievement	2.77	0.83	Accepted
10	Students' friendly learning environment improve their academic achievement	2.89	0.73	Accepted
11	Students have sense of belongingness in the school	2.88	0.86	Accepted
Grand Mean (x)		2.80	0.76	Accepted

The results of data analysis presented on table 2, revealed that the respondents accepted that teacher-student relationship influence students' academic achievement, Allowing teachers and students help to contribute what happens in the school has an influence, Administrators setting standards and letting students know these standards influence students, cordial student-peer relationship influences students' academic achievement, Students' friendly learning environment improve their academic achievement and students have sense of belongingness in the school with the mean scores of 2.78, 2.74, 2.77, 2.77, 2.89. and 2.88 with the standard deviation scores 0.71, 0.79, 0.69, 0.83, 0.73 and 0.86 respectively.

Hypotheses 1

H0₁: There is no significant difference between responses of male and female teachers on how school environment influence secondary school students' academic performance in secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone.

Table 3: t-test Analysis on how school environment influence secondary school students' academic performance in secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone.

Status	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	A	Decision
Male Teachers	35	2.734	0.92	383	0.66	1.960	0.05	Accept
Female Teachers	350	2.636	0.87					

From the results of data analysis presented on table 3, it could be observed that male teaches in Abakaliki Education Zone recorded the high mean score of 2.734 than the mean score 2,656 for teachers, the difference in these mean scores is statistically not significant at a α 0.05. This is because the calculated t-value (0.66) is less than the critical value (1.960). Therefore, the null hypothesis (Hoi) is accepted which implies that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on how school environment influence secondary school students' academic performance in secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone.

IV. Findings

1. School personnel influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone
2. School environment influence secondary school students' academic performance in secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on how school environment influence secondary school students' academic performance ki secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone

V. Discussion

The results of data analysis as presented on table 1, it was revealed that recruitment of non specialist in the teaching hinders students academic performance, lack of experience teaching personnel affects students' academic performance, lack of effective classroom management by teachers influence students performance, excess load work on teaching personnel influence academic performance of students and teachers who go constantly for workshop and seminar influence students' academics performances. Based on the findings [22] noted human resource in school includes teachers, support staff and students has a great influence on students performance. Human resource as a factor of production is affected by adequacy and quality as reflected by level of training and level of motivation. According to behavioral scientists, effective worker performance requires motivation ability and reward system that encourages quality work [3]. Performance of teachers as reflected by level of training and teaching experience will determine the quality of grades attained in an examination.

The results of data analysis presented on table 2, revealed that the respondents accepted

that teacher-student relationship influence students' academic achievement, Allowing teachers and students help to contribute what happens in the school has an influence, administrators setting standards and letting students know these standards influence students, cordial student-peer relationship influences students' academic achievement, students' friendly learning environment improve their academic achievement and students have sense of belongingness in the school. Based on the stated items, the respondents agreed that school environment vehemently influence secondary school students academic performance in Abakaliki Education Zone. The findings agreed with [7] that effective performances of this role require the commitment of all the stakeholders in education such as the parents, students, teachers, administrators, staff and the community in line with School environment strongly influences students' academic performance in the organization where there is open climate for the students.

VI. Conclusion

In subscription, it was concluded that school personnel have a positive influence on students' academic performance in public secondary schools. It was also found that school environment has significant influence on students' academic performance in public secondary schools. From the findings of the study, one could discover that school environment and school play a vital role in determining how students perform academically in their varying schools. This affirms that in the school settings and nature of the environment in the areas of students teachers relationship do have direct bearing on the learning outcome of the students in secondary schools.

VII. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommended that:

1. Qualified personnel with effective propensity toward teaching and learning should be vehemently recruited into the educational system, as such personnel influences students learning habits.
2. Teachers should maintain cordial relationship with students for effective teaching and learning to takes place

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