



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Factors Influencing Academic Performance of Public Secondary School Students in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State – Nigeria

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: Apr 24, 2024	This study aimed to identify the factors influencing academic performance among public secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State, Nigeria. Two research questions were formulated to guide the study, accompanied by two null hypotheses tested using T-tests at a significance level of 0.05. The study population consisted of 1582 students and teachers, with a sample of 354 individuals selected using Raosoft Sample Size Calculator and a multi-stage sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was self structured questionnaire developed by the research titled: Factors Influencing Academic Performance of Public Secondary School Students (FIAPSSS). The instrument was face validated by three experts. A trial test was carried out in Agbani education zone. Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess internal consistency of the FIAPSSS, yielding a satisfactory overall estimate of 0.79. Mean and standard deviation analyses were employed to address the research questions, while T-tests were used to evaluate the null hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that the majority of respondents agree that students who exhibit disinterest in reading, particularly during examinations, lack sufficient time for studying at home, and display apathy towards grades, tend to perform poorly academically. The findings of the study revealed that the majority of respondents believed that the provision of adequate lighting enhances students' academic performance. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among other that promoting awareness of the importance of academic performance among students, fostering positive teacher-student relationships, and enhancing access to modern instructional materials. Additionally, suggestions for further research, educational implications, and contributions to knowledge were also discussed.
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INTRODUCTION

In examining the academic landscape of public secondary education within the Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, it becomes apparent that numerous factors intricately shape the academic performance of students. Understanding these factors is essential for devising effective strategies to enhance educational outcomes and ensure the holistic development of students in the region. Academic performance, as described by Narad and Abdulah (2016), encompasses the evaluation of a student's achievement across a spectrum of educational subjects, reflecting their progress towards both immediate and long-term learning objectives. This evaluation typically relies on assessments conducted by educators, which may include grades assigned by teachers and the attainment of educational goals jointly established by students and instructors over a defined timeframe. The significance of academic performance, as highlighted by Ballotpedia in 2022, is underscored by its impact on students' educational trajectories and future prospects. A student's success in

examinations significantly influences their overall academic performance, serving as a yardstick for assessing their mastery of course content and ability to apply knowledge through various assessment methods, including essays, tests, oral examinations, and standardized exams, against established educational benchmarks.

For students aspiring to pursue further education or secure admission to academic programs locally or internationally, achieving commendable academic performance is imperative. Educators and school administrators employ a range of indicators, including classroom performance, graduation rates, and standardized test scores, to gauge students' academic progress and identify areas for improvement. Notably, academic performance is often quantified through metrics such as grade point average (GPA), high school graduation rates, annual standardized assessments, and college entrance exams. These metrics, as cited by Narad and Abdulah (2016) and Ballotpedia in 2022, serve as predictors of students' future success in academic and professional spheres, providing valuable insights into their capabilities and potential for advancement. In essence, academic performance, as acknowledged by Narad and Abdulah (2016) and supported by Ballotpedia in 2022, serves as a crucial determinant of students' educational journey and prospects for future success. By continually evaluating and monitoring students' progress, educators can provide targeted support to facilitate their growth and development, ultimately empowering them to achieve their academic and career aspirations.

Academic accomplishment holds significant value in both the realms of admissions and employability, particularly in light of the growing demands posed by advancing technologies. Kapur (2018) underscores its pivotal role, emphasizing that higher education is increasingly essential for addressing future technological challenges. Moreover, academic achievement serves as a critical determinant of young individuals' societal development. Those who excel academically are better equipped for adulthood, poised for success in their careers and financial endeavors. The manner in which students thrive academically profoundly shapes their future aspirations and objectives. Ali et al. (2009, as cited in Irfan Mushtaq & Shabana Nawaz Khan, 2012) highlight the transformative potential of academically gifted students, who often emerge as leaders within their communities and contribute significantly to national, state, and local governance structures. These individuals play vital roles in driving social and economic progress, thus underscoring the importance of nurturing talented students within educational institutions.

Consequently, educational institutions, including schools, colleges, and universities, reap substantial benefits from fostering a conducive environment for high-achieving students (Irfan Mushtaq & Shabana Nawaz Khan, 2012). The academic performance of children can be influenced by a myriad of factors, encompassing both teacher-specific elements, such as their training, experience, counseling abilities, and teaching methodologies, as well as personal factors. These personal factors range from students' attitudes toward learning, psychological and health-related issues, time management skills, to the pervasive influence of social media. Additionally, peer group dynamics, efficient resource allocation, and environmental factors play crucial roles. The quality of the school environment, including facilities like the library, laboratory, and classroom settings, alongside the home environment, including parental financial stability, educational background, familial attitudes, and household size, can significantly impact academic performance. Kunje (2011) underscores that children from affluent backgrounds often have access to greater resources and opportunities compared to their counterparts from disadvantaged families. However, Hacker (2008, as cited in Uloko, 2019) emphasizes the adverse impact of poverty on various aspects of a child's life, including academic performance, highlighting the urgent need for concerted efforts to address socio-economic disparities in educational outcomes.

Study conducted by Ajayi & Ajayi (2020) reveals that a significant portion of senior secondary school science students primarily use social media for leisure and social interactions rather than educational purposes. Interestingly, those who combine social media usage with traditional teaching methods demonstrate enhanced participation and performance in their lessons compared to those who solely rely on traditional methods. Furthermore, environmental factors such as poor sanitation can significantly affect academic achievement by predisposing students to waterborne illnesses,

intestinal worm infestations, and malnutrition. Additionally, vision and hearing impairments can impede a student's ability to write, read, and comprehend instructions (Kapur, 2018). The author further asserts that a child's growth and development are intricately linked to their environment, highlighting the critical role of the learning environment in shaping academic success (Kapur, 2018). Recent research has also identified non-student-related issues, including inadequate physical infrastructure and unfavorable school environments, as contributing factors to subpar academic performance. Despite the plethora of viewpoints from various authors on factors influencing the academic performance of public secondary school students, limited research has been conducted in the Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State. Notably, performance in subjects such as literature in English, biology, and chemistry has been below par in certain local government areas. Moreover, the absence of students registering for Further Mathematics in recent years underscores the need to investigate factors influencing academic performance in these contexts. Addressing this research gap is the primary objective of the present study.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A concerning trend of declining academic performance among secondary school students has been noted by numerous scholars, raising alarms within the education sector. Recent years have seen an increasing challenge for students to achieve high academic standards, leading to scrutiny over the quality of graduates produced by the education system. Of particular concern is the persistently poor performance of public secondary school students in external examinations, such as WAEC, indicating a pressing issue that demands attention? While factors such as inadequate teaching methodologies, lack of teaching aids, insufficient government funding, and inadequate textbooks have often been cited as contributors to poor academic performance, it is evident that these may not be the sole reasons behind the decline. Indeed, many students exhibit poor study habits, encounter health challenges, face influences from their home environment, and lack motivation to engage in classroom activities. Moreover, the presence of a conducive school environment is crucial for effective teaching and learning. Despite extensive literature on this subject, little to no research has been conducted to explore the factors influencing academic performance among secondary school students in the Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State. This research gap necessitates further investigation to gain a comprehensive understanding of the underlying factors. The unsatisfactory academic performance observed among public secondary school students, particularly in specific subjects such as biology and literature in English in Enugu East Local Government Area and chemistry in Isi-Uzo Local Government Area, as reported by the Department of Planning, Research and Statistics in the Post-Primary School Management Board (PPSMB) of Enugu State, has prompted the researcher's curiosity. Consequently, the research question formulated is: What factors contribute to the academic performance of public secondary school students in the Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this study is to identify the factors that influence the academic performance of public secondary school students in the Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. determine teacher related factors Influencing Academic Performance of public Secondary School Students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.
2. ascertain environmental related factors Influencing Academic Performance of Public Secondary School Students in Enugu `Education Zone of Enugu State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the teacher related factor Influencing Academic Performance of Public Secondary School Students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State?
2. What are the environmental related factors Influencing Academic Performance of Public Secondary School Students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State?

HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses that guided this study were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent to which their personal related factors influence their Academic Performance in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female students on the extent to which environmental related factors influence their Academic Performance in Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a descriptive survey research design. The total population of the study comprised 1582 SS 3 students and teachers from nine public secondary schools within the Enugu Education Zone. The sample size for the study consisted of 354 individuals, including 194 SS 3 students and 160 teachers, selected from the nine chosen public secondary schools in the Enugu Education Zone. Data collection was facilitated through the use of a self-structured questionnaire developed by the researcher, titled "Factors Influencing Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Enugu Education Zone (FIAPSS)". The questionnaire utilized a four-point Likert scale and nominal values of 4 points, 3 points, 2 points, and 1 point. Validation of the instrument was conducted by two lecturers from the Department of Educational Administration and Planning at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State, and one lecturer from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation at Enugu State University of Science and Technology. Corrections were made to the items and response options based on their feedback. A trial test of the instrument's reliability was carried out with a sample of 10% of teachers and students from public secondary schools in Agbani Education Zone, similar to those in the Enugu Education Zone. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha to establish internal consistency. The scores obtained for each of the four clusters ranged from 720 to 801, with a combined Alpha value of 0.79, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. Two research assistants were trained by the researcher to assist with the personal administration of the questionnaire for data collection. The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents within a two-week period, allowing sufficient time for completion. All 354 distributed questionnaires were successfully returned.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question One: What are the personal related factors influencing Academic Performance of Public Secondary School Students in Enugu Education zone of Enugu State?

S/N	Item Statement	Male Students			Female Students		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1	I do not like reading most of the time especially during examination	1.58	0.66	Reject	1.60	0.67	Reject
2	I am always sick especially during examination	1.65	0.48	Reject	1.65	0.48	Reject
3	I do not have textbook for reading at home	2.68	1.16	Accept	2.64	1.15	Accept
4	I do have adequate time to read at home	3.82	0.58	Accept	3.77	0.64	Accept
5	I am not bothered about scoring high or low grades in examination	3.30	0.96	Accept	3.27	0.97	Accept

6	I do not eat before going to school especially during examination	2.84	1.03	Reject	2.82	1.01	Accept
7	I hardly enter the classroom during classes let alone during examination	2.58	0.91	Reject	3.13	0.92	Accept
8	I enjoy playing around with my friends inside and outside school premises during classes and examination	3.16	0.73	Reject	3.18	0.73	Accept
9	I spend most of my time on social media	3.22	0.69	Accept	2.40	0.68	Reject
	Cluster Mean	2.75	0.80	Accept	2.72	0.81	Accept

The data presented in Table 1 indicates that the items within the table exhibit a cluster mean of 2.75 for male students and 2.72 for female students, utilizing a four-point rating scale. Corresponding standard deviations of 0.80 and 0.81 are observed for male and female students, respectively. These findings support the notion that personal factors play a significant role in influencing the academic performance of public secondary school students in the Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State.

Hypothesis One: There is significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent to which their personal related factors influence the academic performance of public secondary school students in Enugu Education zone of Enugu State.”

Table 2:

Group	N	Mean	S.D	D.F	Sig. Value	t- value
Female	106	2.74	0.371	192	0.775	-0.286
Male	88	2.76	0.377			

A subsequent independent sample t-test was executed to examine the impact of personal factors on the academic achievement of public secondary school students in the Enugu Education Zone, distinguishing between male and female responses at a 95% confidence interval. The analysis revealed that the p-value (0.775) exceeded the predetermined significance level (0.05). Additionally, the calculated t-value (-0.286) was found to be less than the critical t-value (1.96) with 192 degrees of freedom. Consequently, based on these findings, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students in the Enugu Education Zone concerning the influence of personal factors on academic performance.

Research Question Two: What are the environmental related factors influencing Academic Performance of Public Secondary School Students in Enugu Education zone of Enugu State?.

S/N	Item Statement	Male Students			Female Students		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Provision of well equipped school clinic	2.39	0.82	Reject	1.95	0.80	Reject
2	Provision of well equipped library	1.94	0.99	Reject	2.06	0.98	Reject
3	Provision of well equipped laboratory	2.03	0.81	Reject	3.10	0.81	Accept
4	Provision of adequate classroom spaces for teaching students	3.13	0.93	Accept	2.75	0.96	Accept
5	Provision of well equipped staff room for teachers	2.76	0.80	Accept	2.61	0.94	Accept

6	Provision of functional computer centre	2.61	1.24	Accept	2.13	0.76	Reject
7	My parents are involved in my learning activities at home	2.15	1.13	Reject	2.40	1.25	Reject
8	My parents provide my basic needs that encourages me to perform well in my academic	2.40	0.89	Reject	2.45	1.01	Reject
9	My home is located in a noisy environment and it affects my learning activities negatively	2.75	1.04	Accept	3.00	0.95	Accept
10	Un conducive school environment affects learning negatively	2.99	0.95	Accept	2.82	1.01	Accept
11	Pleasant home environment of students influences students performance positively	2.84	1.03	Accept	2.60	0.92	Accept
12	Parents educational/academic qualification influences students performance	2.58	0.93	Accept	3.13	0.73	Accept
13	Provision of adequate light enhances academic performance	3.16	0.73	Accept	3.12	0.74	Accept
	Cluster Mean	2.59	0.95	Accept	2.62	0.91	Accept

The data presented in Table 3 indicates that the items within the table exhibit a cluster mean of 2.59 for male students and 2.62 for female students, using a four-point rating scale. Corresponding standard deviations of 0.95 and 0.91 are observed for male and female students, respectively. These findings support the notion that environmental factors influence the academic performance of public secondary school students in the Enugu Education Zone, Enugu State.

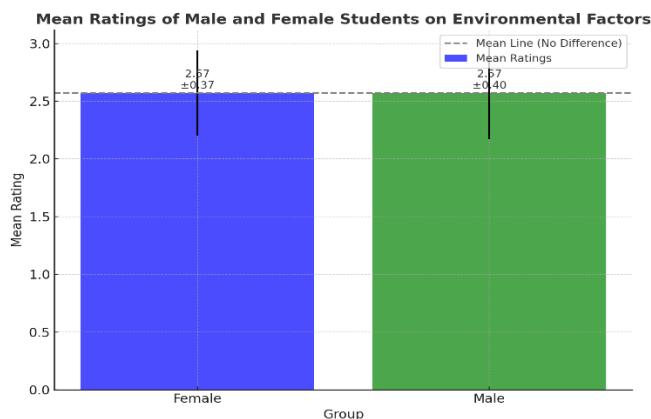
Hypothesis Two:

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female students on the extent to which environmental related factors influence the academic performance of public secondary school students in Enugu Education zone of Enugu State.

Table 4:

Group	N	Mean	S.D	D.F	Sig. Value	t- value
Female	106	2.57	0.371	192	0.958	-0.052
Male	88	2.57	0.399			

An independent sample t-test was performed to assess the influence of environmental factors on the academic performance of students in the Enugu Education Zone, examining male and female responses separately at a 95% confidence interval. The analysis revealed that the p-value (0.958) exceeded the predetermined significance level (0.05). Furthermore, the calculated t-value (-0.052) was found to be less than the critical t-value (1.96) with 192 degrees of freedom. As a result, based on these findings, we do not reject the null hypothesis, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students regarding environmental factors in the Enugu Education Zone.



The above bar chart illustrates the mean ratings and standard deviations of male and female students regarding the extent to which environmental factors influence academic performance in public secondary schools in the Enugu Education Zone. Both male and female students reported identical mean ratings of 2.57, indicating no noticeable difference in their perceptions of the influence of environmental factors. The standard deviations were slightly different, with females having a standard deviation of 0.371 and males 0.399, suggesting minor variations within each group's responses. The results align with the statistical analysis, where the p-value (0.958) exceeded the significance level (0.05) and the calculated t-value (-0.052) was below the critical t-value (1.96) at 192 degrees of freedom. This supports the conclusion that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students regarding the impact of environmental factors on academic performance.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study revealed that the majority of respondents agree that students who exhibit disinterest in reading, particularly during examinations, lack sufficient time for studying at home, and display apathy towards grades, tend to perform poorly academically. These findings are consistent with the assertions of Sriniva and Venkat Krishnan (2016, as cited in Kapur, 2018), who emphasize the importance of diligence, resourcefulness, and conscientiousness in students to enhance their learning and achieve positive academic outcomes. Moreover, these findings align with the perspectives of Maina (as cited in Kapur, 2018), who suggests that a positive attitude is crucial for students to wholeheartedly engage in learning and attain desired academic results. Additionally, Syed (2016) posits that students' attitudes towards studying significantly influence their academic performance.

The findings of the study revealed that the majority of respondents believed that the provision of adequate lighting enhances students' academic performance. This finding is consistent with the observations of Orlu (2013), who noted that good lighting contributes to student performance. Additionally, the majority of respondents agreed that a pleasant home environment positively influences students' performance. This finding aligns with the perspective of Ogunsola, Osuolale, and Ojo (2014), who suggested that a pleasant home environment, effective communication, and good relationships among family members contribute to improved academic performance.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Educational administrators can foster the development of good study habits among students and educate them about the significance of academic performance. Academic performance serves as a crucial criterion for admission into educational institutions and is a determining factor for employers in selecting prospective employees. Moreover, it shapes students' future goals and objectives. Therefore, secondary school students would benefit from education on proper time management, especially concerning the use of social media. Government entities can prioritize the provision of well-equipped staff rooms for teachers, functional libraries, well-equipped laboratories, and an adequate supply of instructional materials to facilitate effective learning environments. Adequate

motivation for teachers is essential, as salary is a significant motivational factor. Highly motivated teachers are more likely to invest extra effort in ensuring comprehensive syllabus coverage and dedicating additional time to support weaker students, thereby enhancing overall academic performance. Furthermore, government-owned secondary schools could be situated away from noisy environments to create conducive learning atmospheres conducive to academic excellence.

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The dissemination and application of the study's findings will significantly contribute to the body of knowledge in education. Educational administrators will gain valuable insights into effective student management strategies aimed at fostering improved academic performance. By implementing these insights, administrators can create supportive environments that empower students to thrive academically, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of education within their institutions.

CONCLUSION

In light of the findings from the study, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the factors influencing the academic performance of students in government-owned secondary schools. Students face various challenges that impact their academic performance, including a lack of textbooks for studying at home, disinterest in grades, limited parental involvement in their learning activities, inadequate provision of basic needs, and distractions from social media. Additionally, teachers encounter obstacles such as strained relationships with students, insufficient preparation, and failure to assess student work, inadequate motivation, lack of experience and skills, and inadequate provision of instructional materials for teaching. Given these challenges, it is imperative for the Ministry of Education to acknowledge and address the factors influencing students' academic performance. Efforts should be made to improve the learning environment by addressing issues such as the availability of textbooks, parental involvement, and the provision of basic needs. Additionally, teachers should receive adequate support and training to enhance their effectiveness in the classroom. By addressing these challenges, the Ministry of Education can work towards improving the academic performance of students in government-owned secondary schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should prioritize the provision of adequate and well-equipped staff rooms for teachers, along with modern instructional materials to enhance the teaching and learning process.
2. Government should ensure the welfare of teachers by ensuring prompt payment of salaries, timely promotion, and provision of other benefits.
3. Teachers should actively engage in in-service training, seminars, workshops, and courses to continually improve their classroom instruction skills and stay updated with best practices in education.
4. Teachers should foster positive relationships with their students, cultivating an environment of trust and respect conducive to effective learning (i.e., a good teacher-learner relationship).
5. Teachers should diligently assess and provide feedback on student tests, assignments, and examinations as necessary, contributing to students' academic progress and development.

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