PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS ON THE IMPACT OF QUALITY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION ZONE

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Abstract

The study investigated the perception of teachers on the impact of quality learning environment on academic performance of Awka South L.G.A of Anambra State. The study was guided with three (3) research questions and three (3) hypotheses. The research adopted the descriptive survey design. The population for the study comprised of 627 public primary school teachers (265 male and 362 female teachers) in Awka South L.G.A. 109 teachers (35 male 74 female) primary five teachers were randomly selected through Simple random sampling and purposive sampling. A Questionnaire titled "Impact of Quality Learning Environment on Academic Performance of Pupils Questionnaire" was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by three education experts. Reliability of the instrument was determined with Cronbach alpha. The reliability test yielded reliability coefficients of 0.89, 0.83 and 0.90 were obtained for each of the clusters respectively with an over-all co-efficient value of 0.87. Mean and standard deviation were used as data analysis instrument while t-test was used to test the hypothesis at .05 level of significance. Findings revealed that primary school teachers perceive that the nature of the physical infrastructure such as the classroom dilapidated buildings, lack of computer laboratory and nature of the school playground had impacts on pupils academic performances. It also reveal that quality social learning environment such as cordial relationship among teachers, cordial relationship between teachers & instructional materials and socialization of pupils through play has meaningful impacts of pupils academic performances. There is a significant mean difference in the perception of male and female teachers on impact of quality physical learning environment on academic performance of primary five pupils. However, there was not significance difference in the perception of male and female teachers on quality social learning and quality temporal learning environment on pupils academic performances. The study recommends among others that entire head teachers should pay more attention in renovations of dilapidated physical

infrastructures and procurement of instructional materials in schools to maximize pupil's activeness to lessons which should contribute to their academic performances.

***Keywords**: Primary school, teacher, quality learning environment, academic performance*

Introduction

Education is perceived as the vehicle that drove the ancient world into the digital society we experience today. It is also responsible for the training of citizens in different careers that would benefit them, their families and society at large. Iwuanyanwu and Uwadiegwu (2019) posited that education is a developmental process initiated by an individual which collectively influences societal values. In the views of Ofojebe and Kene-Chiedu (2020) education is perceived as the corner stone of economic and social development and a principal means of providing for the welfare of individuals. Education is what happens to an individual from birth till death. This means that a child's education begins once he is born. This education begins informally at home and continues formally in the primary school.

Primary school is an educational institution where children receive primary education prior to their entry into secondary school. According to the National Policy on Education as cited in Hayab and Ogunode (2021), primary school is an academic institution where children aged six to eleven (6-11) are provided with basic literacy and numeracy skills. Unicef (2024) asserted that in primary schools, children learn foundational skills that prepare them for life, work and active citizenship. This means that primary school is an inclusive and formal academic institution which provides learning contents to pupils within the particular age limit of five through eleven. The primary school as an educational institution cannot be effective without the activities of a teacher.

A teacher is a trained and certified individual whose job is to teach in schools. He is also a professional in education whose activities is to educate and guide a child on academic issues. Aleke (2016) defined a teacher as one who is professionally trained to impart knowledge, attitudes and skills to a learner. Similarly, Okeleke (2023) defines a teacher as a person with the responsibility of training and educating members of any given society towards the acquisition of desired: knowledge, values, ideologies and skills for the benefit of the society. Okeleke averred that a teacher is expected to possess requisite qualification and qualities relevant to execute teaching practice effectively, so as to instil in the products the desired

knowledge and skills. This definition suggests that a teacher is occupied with many responsibilities bothering himself and students under his watch. Oluwatayo, Ugwude and Aguocha (2020), noted that teachers are generally responsible for maintaining and developing subject knowledge and understanding, reflecting on their own practice, taking active responsibility for their own continuing professional development and participating in the school's procedures for performance management. A teacher is also ultimately responsible for translating educational policies and principles into actions based on practice during interaction with the pupils. A professional teacher would desire to carry out his teaching activities in a quality learning environment.

Learning environment simply means a space provided in the school that befits learning. William (2015) referred to learning environment as the diverse physical locations, contexts, and cultures in which students learn. Relatively, Rusticus, Worthington, Wilson and Joughin (2020) defines learning environment as that which comprise the psychological, social, cultural and physical setting in which learning occurs and in which experiences and expectations are co-created among its participants. Based on the above submissions, quality learning environment is that particular environment specially prepared for learning. A group Alliance for Education Solutions (2024) defined quality learning environment as that which encompasses both the school culture and school climate and characterized with physical and psychological safety; high levels of trust and collaboration; solid understanding of the effects of poverty; positive school, family, home and community relationships; needs-based approaches for all pupils; engaging and relevant curriculum; pupils voice and engagement; effective transition; attention to children attendance and mobility; and appropriate behavioural interventions. A good learning environment is a compendium of all physical infrastructures, instructional materials, and the relationship in the school.

The physical infrastructures as an aspect of the learning environment, comprises of all the buildings made available for learning. Odeh, Oguche and Ivagher (2015) outlined the characteristics of the school infrastructures to include school buildings, furniture's, playgrounds, sporting facilities and other related equipment which aid the teacher's delivery of lesson. Elujekwute (2019) refers to infrastructures as all the physical buildings available for learning in the school environment. It therefore means that infrastructures that make up the school learning environment include the laboratory, library, classrooms, staffroom and other

important physical structures that promote learning. These infrastructures suits meaningfully in learning when they are equipped with desired instructional materials.

The instructional materials that contributes to the learning environment includes all educational materials that are used by teachers to draw their lessons closer to children's level of understanding. Oke (2016) defined instructional material as tangible or physical object which provides rigorous, visual or both to the five senses during teaching and learning. Oke further said that instructional materials are all forms of information carriers that can be used to stimulate and boost effective teaching and learning accomplishments. Similarly, Ogoda, Akume, Edo, and Ogi (2019) posited that instructional materials are those alternative channels of communication, which a classroom teacher can use to concretize a concept during teaching and learning process. Anything that stimulates a learner during learning and results in the understanding of the curricula content may be classified as instructional materials. However, the use of appropriate school infrastructures and instructional materials may not be successful without the desired relationship in the classroom.

The social relationship in the school contributes significantly to student learning as well as their academic performances. Bright in Chinonyerem (2016) observed that teacher-pupil social relationship has a great influence on the school subjects taught by the teachers which reflects on the academic performance of children. The authors study at the University of Maryland College Park showed that learners who have cordial social relationship with their lecturers found the courses those lecturers taught easy and interesting and thus performed academically better, unlike the other courses they took. Akoja (2017) held that nature of teacher-pupil relationship has an effect on pupils' academic performance in the subject area the teacher is teaching and that there is a tendency for immorality and lousiness on both side if the relationship becomes too informal. Hence, Suleiman and Otieno, (2022) assert that the relationship between teachers, learners and instructional materials are significant in the quest for quality education. On the whole, the learning environments as discussed in paragraphs above, can effectively contribute to children's academic performances.

Academic performance is described as how well a child performed in a particular academic endeavor. Abaidoo (2018) posit that academic performances are those measurable results of a child culled from learning activities and exercises, test, defense, practical, assignments and examinations. According to Amaechina and Ezeh (2019) academic performance refers to how

well a learner accomplished his or her tasks and studies. The authors averred that academic performance is ability of a learner to obtain high grades and standard test scores in school courses, especially courses that are part of the core academic curriculum. Academic performance also deals with the way children go about their studies and responsibilities given to them by their teachers. This corroborates with Ajayi and Abaidoo (2022) who submitted that academic performance is the competency of learners to complete various assignment allocated to them by their teachers. Academic performances of school children are important because it periodically evaluates efforts made by pupils towards learning. It also serves as a mirror to access the school environment to know if its equal to children's motivation and determines learning. Academic performances of pupils is sometimes determined by gender.

Gender refers to the socio-cultural, personal, and physical features of being a male or female. It is a spectrum that is identified and expressed in diverse ways. Onye and Obizue (2020) averred that gender connotes all the roles, behaviours, and traits that society deems appropriate and expects of male and female individuals. Ubabudu (2024) reported that in recent times, educational stakeholders have expressed great concern about the poor academic performance of learners, and the academic gap which is sometimes attributed to gender disparity. However, there has been debates over gender and academic performances. For instance, a research study conducted by Orji, Phoebe, Ogbonnaya, Nkpoyen and Edet (2921) showed that gender has no appreciable effect on the academic performance among learners. But other scholars and their findings show the contrary. Conversely, research by Asif, Safdar, & Ali (2020), Kisigot, Ogula, and Munyua (2020), Siddiky and Haque (2024), revealed that gender or sex had an impact on learners' academic performances.

It has been observed through the pages of different literatures that some authorities had aired their views on what should be the impact of quality learning environment with particular reference to academic performance of pupils taking cognizance of the physical, social and temporal learning environment. For instance, Hurst, Wallace and Nixon (2013) reported that social interactions helps the teacher in effective teaching and improve learning by enhancing children's knowledge of literacy, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This is in-line with Lukman (2023) who reported that a positive social learning environment contributes to learners behavior in class which also positively tells on their performances in school. Green-Taylor (2024) posited that the temporal learning environment creates sense of security, help young children to learn about their world, adjust to new situations and prevent challenging

behaviours. The author further narrated that the temporal learning environment which comprises of the daily routes in the school also helps young children to feel safe within a nurturing network of caregivers. Ikegbusi, Eziamaka and Iheanacho (2021) held that there is a serious influence of school physical structure on pupils learning and interest in schooling. The physical learning structure here according to Ikegbusi et al comprise of the aesthetic design of the school buildings, spaced and well arranged classroom, indoor and outdoor facilities and a host of others. Contributing, Ihekoronye (2020) observed that a conducive and healthy school environment shapes the attitudes which children develop toward the school as well as promotes teaching and learning; while Okenyi (2022) pointed out that the use of instructional materials in teaching makes classroom activities practical, real, motivating and attractive for both teachers and pupils. Akurut (2023) also reported that instructional materials such as animations, study guides and tours, website archives' among others contributed meaningfully towards children's academic performances. This in effect translates to enhance pupils' academic achievements, as it results to active and effective participation in the classroom for both learners and instructors.

A mere observation at some public primary schools in Awka South LGA indicates that there are classrooms provided for learning. These classrooms are full of desk and chairs though some are broken. Some walls of these classrooms are painted while others are not. A good number of them had pictures of objects, fruits and animals on them. There is also an observed conventional class routines activities such as time for devotions, time for lessons, time for break, and time for dismissal. A critical observation also shows that pupils relates with each other in play and classroom activities such as drawing and question/answer series. These observations where on ground in some schools. However, the perceptions of teachers on the impacts of these learning environments is yet to be ascertained and this becomes a major gap in this study. Also, in different literatures consulted, none were found to be conducted in the study area among the literatures; there is also absent of teachers perceptions on the impact of learning environments on pupils academic performances and this is another gap created in this study. There is also dearth of opinions of male and female teachers concerning their perceptions on the impact of quality physical, social and temporal learning environment. These observed gaps are what this study sought to fill.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study

1. What are the perceptions of teachers on the impact of quality physical learning environment on pupils academic performance in Awka South L.G.E.A of Anambra State?
2. What are the perceptions of teachers on the impact of quality social learning environment on pupils academic performance in Awka South L.G.E.A of Anambra State?
3. What are the perceptions of teachers on the impact of quality temporal learning environment on pupils academic performance in Awka South L.G.E.A of Anambra State?

Research Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in the mean perception of male and female teachers on the impact of quality physical learning environment on pupils academic performance Awka South L.G.E.A
2. There is no significant difference in the mean perception of male and female teachers on the impact of quality social learning environment on pupils academic performance in Awka South L.G.E.A
3. There is no significant difference on the mean perception of male and female teachers on the impact of quality temporal learning environment on pupils academic performance in Awka South L.G.E.A

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. It was guided by three research questions ad tree hypothesis. The population for the study comprised of 627 public primary school teachers (265 male and 362 female teachers) in Awka south L.G.E.A. 109 teachers were e sample size for the study. Simple random sampling and purposive sampling was used to select 35 male teachers and 74 female teachers in the public Primary schools. The instruments for data collected consisted of 18 items used to elicit relevant information based on the problem investigated. The data for the study was gathered with a questionnaire titled "Impact of Quality Learning Environment on Pupils Academic Performance Questionnaire. The instrument was

validated and yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.83, 0.86 and 0.87 with a general index of 0.86. A criterion mean of 2.50 was also established to analyze the questionnaire, thus, responses with mean of 2.50 and above were agreed while those below 2.50 were disagreed. The t-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule is that if P-value is less than level of significance, reject Ho.

Results:

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of teachers on the impact of quality physical learning environment on pupil's academic performance in Awka South L.G.E.A of Anambra State?

Table 1

Mean Ratings on Perceptions of Teachers on the Impact of Quality Physical Learning Environment on Academic Performance of Primary Five Pupils

S/N		Gender	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	The nature of the classroom play a major role in children's success in learning	Male	35	2.81	0.46	Agree
		Female	74	2.72	1.42	Agree
2	Dilapidated buildings in the school demoralize children's active participation to learning and this affects their performance	Male	35	2.78	1.83	Agree
		Female	74	2.92	1.61	Agree
3	Closeness of classrooms makes classrooms noisy and affects learning	Male	35	2.01	0.23	Disagree
		Female	74	2.40	0.88	Disagree
4	None-availability and use of quality library as perceived by teachers contributes to poor learning among pupils	Male	35	2.19	1.26	Disagree
		Female	74	2.33	1.42	Disagree
5	Inadequate quality edifice for computer laboratory contributes to poor learning and performance in computer studies	Male	35	3.01	1.49	Agree
		Female	74	2.77	0.98	Agree
6	The aesthetic nature of the school environment contributes to academic success of pupils	Male	35	1.96	0.54	Disagree
		Female	74	2.24	0.12	Disagree
7	The nature of the school playground determines children's success in physical education	Male	35	2.90	0.56	Agree
		Female	74	2.69	1.09	Agree
	Grand Mean	**Male**		**2.52**	**0.91**	
		Female		**2.58**	**1.07**	Agreed

The findings in Table 1 shows the mean ratings on perceptions of primary school teachers on the impact of quality physical learning environment on academic performance of primary five pupils. It shows that primary school teachers perceive that the nature of the classroom, dilapidated buildings, lack of computer laboratory, and nature of the school playground are physical factors that impacts on pupils academic performance.

Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of teachers on the impact of quality social learning environment on pupil's academic performance in Awka South L.G.E.A of Anambra State?

Table 2

Mean Ratings on Perceptions of Teachers on the Impact of Quality Social Learning Environment on Academic Performance of Primary Five Pupils

S/N		Gender	N	Mean	SD	Decision
8	Cordial relationship among teachers has a positive impact of pupils academic performances	Male	35	2.56	0.72	Agree
		Female	74	2.81	0.42	Agree
9	Poor relationship among pupils in school contributes to their poor academic performances	Male	35	2.69	0.84	Agree
		Female	74	2.60	1.27	Agree
10	Positive relationship among teachers with instructional materials makes pupils active to lessons	Male	35	2.77	1.22	Agree
		Female	74	2.93	0.45	Agree
11	Academic performance of pupils is commendable when pupils socialize meaningfully with play materials	Male	35	2.82	0.92	Agree
		Female	74	2.64	1.33	Agree
12	Pupils tend to perform academically better when their relationship with teachers becomes informal	Male	35	1.62	1.67	Disagree
		Female	74	2.30	1.23	Disagree
	Grand Mean	**Male**		**2.51**	**1.07**	
		Female		**2.65**	**0.94**	Agreed

The findings in Table 2 shows the mean ratings on perceptions of primary school teachers on the impact of quality social learning environment on academic performance of primary five pupils. It shows that primary school teachers perceive that cordial relationship among teachers, positive relationship among teachers with instructional materials and relationship among pupils

with play materials impacts academic performances meaningfully. It also shows that poor relationship among pupils and informal relationship with pupils and teachers leads to poor academic performances.

Research Question 3: What are the perceptions of teachers on the impact of quality temporal learning environment on pupil's academic performance in Awka South L.G.E.A of Anambra State?

Table 3

Mean Ratings on Perceptions of Teachers on the Impact of Quality Temporal Learning Environment on Academic Performance of Primary five Pupils

S/N		Gender	N	Mean	SD	Decision
13	Children who spend much time in play outperform others in school	Male	35	0.29	1.64	Disagree
		Female	74	0.72	1.39	Disagree
14	Children who spend normal time in lunch and rush back to lessons outperform others who spend much time	Male	35	2.98	1.24	Agree
		Female	74	3.02	0.52	Agree
15	Much time spend on group activities encroaches into other assessments and this affects other performances	Male		2.76	0.45	Agree
		Female		2.88	0.22	Agree
16	Children who arrive class late miss lessons but this does not have negative impact on their performances	Male	35	1.29	1.09	Disagree
		Female	74	0.82	1.88	Disagree
17	Much time spent on rest negatively impacts on pupils performances	Male	35	1.17	1.74	Disagree
		Female	74	2.34	1.20	Disagree
18	There is high performance of pupils who spend less time in reading rather than attending to lessons	Male	35	2.12	1.34	Disagree
		Female	74	1.95	1.12	Disagree
	Grand Mean	**Male**		**1.43**	**1.25**	
		Female		**1.95**	**1.05**	**Disagreed**

The findings in Table 3 shows the mean ratings on perceptions of primary school teachers on the impact of quality temporal learning environment on academic performance of primary five

pupils. It shows that primary school teachers perceive that children who spend normal time in lunch and rush back to lessons outperform others who spend much time and that much time spends on group activities encroaches into other assessments and this affects other performances. Children who overplay and arrive to school late were victim of poor performances.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean perception of male and female teachers on the impact of quality physical learning environment on pupils academic performance Awka South L.G.E.A

Table 4

t-test comparison of mean ratings in perception of male and female educators on the impact of quality physical learning environment on academic performance of primary five pupils

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P-value	Decision
Male	35	2.52	0.91				
				107	1.984	0.352	Significant
Female	74	2.58	1.07				

Table 4 indicates that there is a significant mean difference in the perception of teachers on impact of quality physical learning environment on academic performance of primary five pupils. The null hypothesis in this regard is therefore rejected since the p-value (0.352) is less than the level of significant (.05).

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean perception of male and female teachers on the impact of quality social learning environment on pupils academic performance in Awka South L.G.E.A

Table 5

t-test comparison of mean ratings in perception of male and female teachers on the impact of quality social learning environment on academic performance of primary five pupils

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P-value	Decision
Male	35	2.51	0.07				Not
				107	1.984	0.909	Significant
Female	74	2.65	0.94				

Table 5 indicates that there is no significant mean difference in the perception of perception of male and female teachers on the impact of quality social learning environment on academic performance of primary five pupils. The null hypothesis in this regard is therefore not rejected since the p-value (0.909) is greater than the level of significant (.05)

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference on the mean perception of male and female teachers on the impact of quality temporal learning environment on pupils academic performance in Awka South L.G.E.A

Table 6

t-test comparison of mean ratings in perception of male and female teachers on the impact of quality temporal learning environment on academic performance of primary five pupils

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P-value	Decision
Male	35	1.43	1.25				Not
				107	1.984	1.238	Significant
Female	74	1.95	1.05				

Table 6 indicates that there is a significant mean difference in the perception of male and female teachers on the impact of quality temporal learning environment on academic performance of primary five pupils. The null hypothesis in this regard is therefore not rejected since the p-value (1.238) is greater than the level of significant (.05)

Discussion

Findings show that the nature of the classroom, dilapidated buildings, lack of quality computer laboratory and nature of the school playground as perceived by teachers constitute a problem towards quality physical learning environment whereas closeness of classrooms, non-use of library and aesthetic nature of the school environment do not. The above findings corroborates the findings of Nuhu (2015) reported that the classroom building with adequate furniture; class with small class population and the use of instructional materials were found to have positive impact on the performance of students. Ikegbusi, Eziamaka and Iheanacho (2021) also identified physical facilities such as nature of indoor & outdoor facilities, spaced classroom, and the beautiful nature of the school buildings on as compliments to learning interest and academic performances. The hypothesis test indicated that there was a significant difference between perception of male and female teachers on impact of quality physical environment on pupils academic performance.

Finding also show that teachers perceive that their cordial relationship, relationship among pupils, positive relationship with the teacher and instructional materials contributed to the impact of quality social environment. The above findings are in-line with Suleiman and Otieno, (2022) reported that cooperation among teachers, learners and instructional materials remains vital towards the quest for quality education. This means that the above findings revolves around cooperation; thus, when there is no cooperation, the effect tells on \learners and their performances. Some of the above findings are also in-line with Ikegbusi, Eziamaka and Iheanacho (2021) who reported that teachers interaction with co-teachers and other staff; their interaction with pupils; and pupils interaction with their fellows were perceived as significant towards academic performance and achievements of learners. The hypothesis tested show that male and female teachers do not differ in their perceptions on the impact of quality physical environment on pupil's academic performance.

Finding show that teachers perceive that the temporal learning environment children find themselves such as normal time for lunch had meaningful impact on their academic performances. However, children who spend much time in play, spends much time in lunch, much time on group activities that encroaches into other lessons, those who came late and those who spend less time in reading were perceived by teachers as having negative impacts on academic performances. The above findings are in-line with Paris, Beeve and Springer (2017)

who reported that an organized classroom is known with its temporal environment which includes the use of schedules and established routines and that they are important because they influences a Child's social and emotional development. Green-Taylor (2024) also identified the school timing, sequence and length of routines and activities that take place throughout the school day as the temporal environment that determines academic performances of learners. This means that the nature of the temporal environment in any school determines if students will perform high or low. The hypothesis tested show that male and female teachers do not differ in their perceptions on the impact of quality temporal learning environment on pupil's academic performance.

Conclusion

Primary school teachers in Awka South perceived that the physical layout of the school, the social environment and the temporal environment has a great impact on pupils academic performance of Awka South L.G.EA. The physical facilities includes the classroom structures, the laboratory, library, the playground to among others. The social relationships includes teacher to teacher, teacher to pupils and finally pupils with their colleagues while the temporal environment includes the daily routine that goes on in the school. All these impacts pupil's academic performances.

Recommendations

Based on the findings in this study, the paper recommends as follows:

1. State government should ensure that physical infrastructures in the school are periodically maintained and where there is need to erect new ones, it should be done urgently so that teachers and pupils can assess them for learning. Rehabilitation and maintenance will enhance the aesthetic of schools, attract pupils to school and thus, contribute to pupils academic performances.

2. Social environment in the school should be strengthened through teachers efforts to ensure that children feel free to associate with their teachers and peers at all times for the purpose of academics.

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