

Impact of School Location on Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State: Implications for Educational Managers

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Abstract: The study investigated the impact of School location on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Ebonyi state: implication for educational managers. The Study adopted descriptive research design. The study was guided by three research questions. The population of the study was 4, 500 teachers while the sample size was 450 teachers. Self-developed structured questionnaire was used by the researcher titled: Questionnaire on impact of school location on the academic performance in public secondary schools in Ebonyi State (QISLAPPSES) to collect data from the respondents. The instrument was face-validated by three experts in the department of Educational Foundations, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. A test – retest procedure was used to obtain the reliability of the instrument. Results of the two tests were correlated using Pearson Product moment correlation, which yielded 0.76. Data collected were analyzed using mean scores. The study discovered some location related factors that influence students' academic performance, location - related factors that affect teachers' level of productivity in relation to students' academic performance and the Location – Related factors that affect Principals' administrative effectiveness in relation to Students' Academic Performance. The study, recommended that the quality and quantity of teachers posted to rural schools be improved, special allowance called “bush allowance” be paid to rural teachers. That staff quarters be built for rural teachers with minimum comfort, sharing of school facilities should be even.

Key words: Impact • School Location • Academic Performance • Implication • Students and Educational Managers

INTRODUCTION

The importance of education to individuals and the society cannot be overemphasized. Thus, no responsible person or society can effort to ignore education of any level, especially at the secondary school level and hope to grow and develop. Perhaps, this was why Briggs [1] stated that education is a long-term investment by the society to make itself a better place in which to live and a better place in which to make living.

The 26% of annual budget expected to be allocated to education by UNESCO underline its overall importance as one of the biggest industries in Nigeria. It was the view of Thompson [2] that education has become a pragmatic instrument for national development since it constitutes a device for achieving various goals and objects of

migrations. In fact, no nation can afford to neglect education and be free. Supporting the above statement, Fafunwa in Okafor [3] stated that education is the best defense of a nation and any amount of money spend on it, is money well spent. Still on the importance of education, Watson [4] identified dividends of modern education to include economic reforms, moral revival, cultural awareness, rural regeneration, national integration, democratic government and manpower development.

Actually, no educational system globally is perfect and Nigeria's is no exception. It is a fact that Nigeria's educational system (Secondary Education) is characterized by many problems, such as, inadequate supply of teachers, school facilities, poor remuneration among others. This particular situation (Students poor

academic performance) has elicited and continues to elicit negative comments from both experts and layman alike on education standard in general and students' academic performance in particular.

Commenting on the present educational system, Animasaun [5] asserted that there is need for a state of emergency to be declared on the educational sector and for three years all attention will be on restructuring the entire system. Supporting Animasaun, Osuji [6] suggested the need for schools formerly under the various church missions to be handed back to them so as to arrest the fast dwindling standard of education at all levels. He explained that this move will go a long way in not only guaranteeing qualitative education but also fight the problem of students' involvement in examination malpractices, cultism and teachers' negative attitudes. This leads to the issue of school location which when unfavorable affects teachers transfer from one school to the other, thus, negatively affecting smooth running of poorly located schools.

The issue of school location is relevant in discussing students' academic performance on one hand and teachers' morale and productivity on the other hand. The location of a school if unfavorable, can negatively affect the realization of goals of education in many ways. Commenting on this, Ajilo [7] stated that disparity in Urban and Rural secondary schools in terms of educational facilities and quality teachers goes a long way in determining the academic fortunes of students in both locations. In fairness, social justice demands that schools in urban and rural areas should get equal treatment in terms of human and material resources allocation.

Many factors had been attributed to students' poor academic performance which made the educational managers and policy makers to water down university admission requirements to five credits at two sittings with English Language and Mathematics inclusive. These responsible factors had been identified to include students' dependence on examination malpractice, lack of teachers in core subjects, inadequate school facilities, students' apathy, teachers' laxity, incessant changes in school curriculum and unfavorable school location among others. Among all the factors pinpointed for students' poor academic performance, unfavorable location seems very interesting due to its previously not being given the attention it deserved in Ebonyi State.

Location has to do with the site of a school in a particular community of people. There are three types of locations namely; urban, semi-urban and rural with

specific characteristics. Ikhide[8] identified the features of urban location to include: social amenities, high population density, noise, pollution, high crime rate, intensive commercial and industrial activities and general rowdiness. He explained that rural locations are in sharp contrast which is characterized by absence of social amenities, low population density, poor road network, serenity of nature, low crime rate and low commercial and industrial activities. School location can affect students' academic performance in one way or the other positively or negatively as the case may be. The main focus of this study was to investigate the impact of school location on students' academic performance: implication for educational managers.

Statement of the Problem: Students' academic performance is a topical issue for some time now. Records with the Secondary Education Board (SEB) Abakaliki show that generally the results in West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) and National Examinations Council (NECO) are deplorable. The implications of this deplorable situation in students' academic performance is a source of worry and frustration to all stake holders to education in Ebonyi State and even beyond who are asking some pertinent questions such as : How are we sure that this deplorable situation will not continue? What efforts are the governments making to solve the problem in both urban and rural secondary schools in view of the lack of consideration given to the potential devastating impact of unfavorable school location on the academic performance of students? As the above questions seek answers, the problem of this study therefore is to establish the influence of school location on students' academic performance in Ebonyi State.

Purpose of the Study: The main purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of school location on students' academic performance in Ebonyi State:

Implications for Educational Managers: Specifically, the study sought to determine:

- Location-related factors that influence students' academic performance in Ebonyi State.
- Location-related factors that influence teachers' productivity in relation to students' academic performance in Ebonyi State.
- Location-related factors that influence principals' administrative effectiveness in relation to students' academic performance in Ebonyi State.

Research Questions: The following three research questions guided the study.

- What is the location-related factors that influence students' academic performance in Ebonyi State?
- What is the location-related factors that influence teachers' productivity in relation to students' academic performance in Ebonyi State?
- What is the location-related factors that influence principals' administrative effectiveness in relation to students' academic performance in Ebonyi State?

Scope of the Study: The study was de-limited to the impact of school location-related factors that influence students' academic performance, location-related factors that influence teachers' productivity in relation to students' academic performance and location-related factors that influence principals' administrative effectiveness in relation to students' academic performance. The study was carried out in 45 selected public secondary schools in Ebonyi State.

Research Design: The study adopted co-relational survey design. It was designed to investigate the impact of school location on students' academic performance: implications for educational managers. Azubuike (9) informed that survey research examines People's opinions, motivations, interests and Perceptions on a subject through the use of questionnaire or interview. To that effect, co-relational survey design was used because it sought to determine the relationship between school location and students' academic performance.

Population: The population for this study consisted of all the public secondary school teachers in Ebonyi State numbering 4, 500 covering the three education zones of Abakaliki, Afikpo and Onueke.

Sample: The study made use of 450 respondents drawn from the three education zones in Ebonyi State. Stratified sampling method of selection was used to ensure that every zone had the chance of being represented. Fifteen public secondary schools were selected from each zone. In each of the fifteen public selected secondary schools, ten teachers were also randomly selected for the study. On the whole, 450 teachers were selected for the study.

Instrument for Data Collection: A self-developed structured questionnaire was used for data collection.

The instrument contained 21 items. It was face-validated by three experts all from the department of Educational Foundations, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to analyze the data collected for reliability. Reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained for the instrument using test-retest procedure.

Method of Data Collection: One hundred percent of the 450 copies of the questionnaire administered to the 450 respondents through on – the- spot method of administration was properly filled and collected with the help of the Research Assistants.

Method of Data Analysis: The three research questions posted were answered using Mean scores and Standard deviation. Items that attracted Mean ratings of 2.50 and above were regarded as important factor influencing negatively students' academic performance and vice-versa.

Results of Data Analysis: Results of data analysis were presented according research questions in tables.

Research Question 1: What is the location-related factors that influence students' academic performance in Ebonyi State?

From the table above, it was observed that all the seven items (1-7) recorded quite above the cut-off point of 2.50. They were therefore considered as important as far as location-related factors that influence students' academic performance are concerned.

Research Question 2: What is the location-related factors that influence teachers' productivity in relation to students' academic performance in Ebonyi State?.

The results as revealed in Table 2, indicated that all seven factors listed as location related factors influence teachers' productivity in relation to students' academic performance are important, as all the seven factors had a Mean above the cut-off of 2.50. Thus, all the factors in table 2 are important factors influencing the productivity of teachers in relation to students' academic Performance.

Research Question 3: What are the location-related factors that influence principals' administrative effectiveness in relation to students' academic performance in Ebonyi State?

Table 1: Mean responses of respondents on location-related factors that influence students' academic performance

S/N	Location-related factors that influence students' academic Performance	\bar{x}	SD	Remark
1.	Inadequate school facilities	3.83	0.37	Important
2.	Inadequate infrastructures in schools	2.93	0.87	Important
3.	Inadequate provision of teachers	3.50	0.65	Important
4.	High rate of indiscipline in schools	3.20	0.60	Important
5.	Absence of dedicated students	3.25	0.60	Important
6.	Absence of quality teachers	3.60	0.64	Important
7.	Poor remuneration of teachers	3.65	0.65	Important

Table 2: Mean responses of the respondents on location-related factors that influence teachers' productivity in relation to students' academic performance

S/N	Location-related factors that influence teacher's productivity	\bar{x}	SD	Remark
1.	Long distance inhibits teachers' productivity due to persistent lateness	3.80	0.64	Important
2.	Cultism and its dire consequences affect teachers' productivity	3.43	0.66	Important
3.	Lack of teaching aids in schools inhibits teachers' productivity	3.50	0.60	Important
4.	Persistent noise from commercial and industrial activities inhibit teachers' productivity in schools	3.66	0.65	Important
5.	Students' high rate of truancy inhibits teachers' productivity.	3.50	0.59	Important
6.	Poor school supervision inhibits teachers' productivity.	3.68	0.61	Important
7.	Presence of congested classrooms inhibits teachers' productivity	3.70	0.90	Important

Table 3: Mean responses of the respondents on location-related factors that influence principals' administrative effectiveness in relation to students' academic performance

S/N	Location-related factors that influence Principals' administrative effectiveness.	\bar{x}	SD	Remark
1.	Lack of enough teachers	3.60	0.62	Important
2.	Inadequate infrastructures	3.02	0.70	Important
3.	Poor security for lives and property	3.41	0.63	Important
4.	Presence of cult activities	3.62	0.65	Important
5.	Staff insubordination	3.43	0.66	Important
6.	Absence of staff quarters	3.55	0.59	Important
7.	Hostility of communities	2.68	0.71	Important

From the Table 3 above, items 15-21 quite recorded Mean ratings above the cut-off point of 2.50 and above. They are thus considered important as far as location-related factors that influence Principals' administrative effectiveness in relation to students' academic performance in secondary schools is concerned.

Discussion of Findings: The study revealed location-related factors that influence students' academic performance. These factors included inadequate supply of educational facilities, inadequate infrastructures in schools, inadequate supply of quality teachers, inadequate number of teachers, prevalence of in disciplinary behaviors etc. These factors recorded high Mean ratings, thus underlining the fact that location significantly influences students' academic performance.

The above findings tally with the assertion of Osuji [6] that schools should be handed over to the Church missions in order to arrest the fast dwindling standard of education at all levels in addition to fighting cultism in schools.

The results further revealed location-related factors that influence teachers' productivity in relation to students' academic performance such factors included

long distance, cultism, students' truancy etc. These findings agree with Egbuniwe[10] who observed that teachers of nowadays lack the necessary level of dedication required to take students to the next level. He emphasized that teaching unlike other professions requires a high level of dedication to guide the students through the right but tortuous path to academic excellence.

The results also reveal a location-related factors that influence principals' administrative effectiveness in relation to students' academic performance. These included lack of enough teachers, absence of adequate infrastructures, lack of security, menace of cultism, insubordination and accommodation problems. The above findings tally with the view of Kemjika[11] that absence of adequate teachers, school facilities, quality teachers contribute to poor academic performance of students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that location of schools, provision of adequate human and material resources play pivotal roles in terms of influencing students' academic performance. To this

effect, educational managers should lay more emphasis on sharing school resources in equitable manner between urban and rural schools.

Recommendation: Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Adequate number of teachers should be made available to public secondary schools.
- Adequate security should be provided by the government in all the Public secondary schools in the State.
- Government should device good strategies to combat cultism in public secondary schools.
- Teachers' remuneration should be enhanced.
- Staff accommodation should be made available in all public secondary schools especially in rural areas.
- To minimize truancy, adequate punishment should be given to truants in schools to serve as deterrent to others.
- Adequate school facilities should be provided.

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