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Insecurity of School Environment and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Imo State.

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Abstract.

This paper investigated the effects of insecurity in the school environment on the academic performance of secondary school students in Imo State. A population of 2000 students comprising of 1000 males and females each responded to the instrument adapted for the study. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Means and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and an independent t-test was used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that insecurity of the school environment significantly affects the academic performance of students. The insecurity of the school environment resulted in student's irregular attendance and absenteeism from school which consequently led to poor performance of students in their examinations. Other contributory factors to students' poor performance were parent's harassment of teachers and sexual harassment and rape suffered by the students. Following the findings, it was recommended that government, organizations, and other stakeholders in education should organize workshops and trainings to equip school administrators with security skills and knowledge. School administrators should step up disciplinary measures against staff and student's misconduct or anti-social behavior.

Keywords: Insecurity, School environment, Academic performance

Introduction

Globally, the significance of education has been sufficiently established. However, with a vacuum in developing a conducive learning environment, the aim of education is unlikely to be accomplished. These aims could be achieved only by having a peaceful and comfortable school environment as well as the societal circumstances. Insecurity in this context is the state of being exposed to danger or threat. It is also lack of protection. In case of any insecure feeling with regards to the internal or external environment of the school, it could be much deterred for students and teachers to work properly in such an environment. Previous studies have admitted that the feeling of an insecure environment may affect the student's academic performance. Further, it has been demonstrated that the school environment issues are of multiple dimensions which include physical fears, social fears, as well as academic fears. The dimensions of physical fears include school outlook and internal building; playgrounds, libraries, laboratories, etc, whereas social fears include the quality of interpersonal relationships at different levels. For instance the quality of student-teacher relationship and the relationship among teachers, students and administrators, teachers and administrators fair treatment toward students, competition and contribution of students as well as teachers to the decision-making process of the school (Miller & Cunningham, 2011). The academic elements of the school environment incorporate the nature of guidance given to students and instructors' desire for good accomplishments by the students (Miller & Cunningham, 2011).

In any case, one of the significant issues that trouble students, guardians, and partners in Nigeria today is the academic execution of the students. As indicated by Fehimola (2009), poor academic scholarly execution of students concerning inward and outward assessments is one of the issues and difficulties confronting the instructive framework in "Nigeria. Truly it provides parents, guidance, and students alike with the feeling of contentment and satisfaction when youngsters exceed expectations academically. Scholarly execution involves that students keep up n palatable academic record and meet the commitments of the courses they are enlisted (Ojukwu & Chigozirim, 2015). Scholarly execution is the result of training, the degree to which students

accomplish the instruction objectives. Put in another way, great scholarly execution is the individual comportment and responsibility of the student to complete his/her academic purposes which may incorporate focusing on one examination, having the certainty to progress arranged academic exercises in school to maximally realize his life vocation or dream (Oloilnioye, 2008). Positive or negative academic execution can make or blemish the objectives of a student's life similar to that of the national objectives and advancement.

A decent scholarly presentation would instigate inspiration and excitement in the students to accomplish high academic standing as compared to his/her mates. It achieves flexibility and ensures high achievement of the students. The performance of Imo secondary school students in outside examinations, for instance, the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) directed by the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) seems by all standards to be poor, which neglects the meeting of the basic learning necessary for obtaining essential abilities and fitness. Poor scholarly execution is by all standards the regrets for the day as reflected in the students' assessments. For instance, the SSCE results for 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014 show that 24.94%, 30.99%, 25.99% 29.27%, and 31.28% individually of the candidates who sat for the examinations acquired five credits including mathematics and English language necessary for the entrance into the Nigerian universities. Students' poor scholarly exhibition has for a while been credited to educators' inadequacy, the poor mental readiness of students with less or no reference to the impact of uncertainty of the school environment and its related elements. However, teachers and clinicians have understood that numerous students perform ineffectively in their academics, not because they do not have the psychological capacity to progress nicely, but because they might have been influenced by the uncertain school environment In this line Ojukwu and Nwanna (2015). Ojukwu and Onuoha (2016) have reported how influence affected students' behavior and their psychological adjustment separately.

Ojukwu and Chigozirim (2015), noticed that an uncertain school environment, including weather-beaten conditions and instructor's negative disposition to approve and acknowledge the enthusiastic needs of students, might prompt undue impact and conflict practices. Equally, they stated that in unreliable school surroundings, students are vulnerable to mental issues as their cognitive needs are never met or thoughtlessly dealt with, with consistent isolations in the school network along with religious inborn and based outlines. Guardians also complain that their youngsters are harassed and harmed, and the classrooms are packed, inadequately ventilated, and lit.

The role of administrative heads in the management of modern schools in a society that is characterized by insecurity and other challenges is very vital to accomplishing school goals. The school head should not only evolve preventive measures but be proactive, innovative, and dynamic in his leadership styles to guarantee the safety of staff and students in a school system. .

Statement of the Problem

Insecurity and insurgency have assumed a frightening dimension in which schools, especially public schools are the worst hit. High-profile shootings have been witnessed in Owerri town, Orlu, and Okigwe, and hostage-taking and kidnapping of both staff and students have been reported. Violent armed, cultism, rape, gangsterism, and other manner of psychologically disturbing attacks have been witnessed in the school recently. In the recent past major stakeholders in education such as government, industries, communities, parents, schools, and even students and many others have been lamenting over the poor quality of Nigerian students in both learning and character, suggesting a poor academic performance. Researchers and authors have speculated reasons for poor performance on the part of the Nigerian students in secondary schools including those in Imo State to acquire the necessary

school psychological and academic skills to cope with the demands of life and living in and outside the school.

Others have focused on teaching and learning material as well as the effect of insecurity of the school environment on the academic performance of secondary school students. An area that appears to be neglected by past researchers is the implication of the effect of insecurity in the school environment on secondary school students' academic performance for school management. On this premise, the study seeks to investigate the effects of insecurity in the school environment on the academic performance of secondary school students in Imo state: Implication for education management.

Research Questions

Two research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What are the factors that constitute the school environment in Imo State?
2. What effect does insecurity of the school environment have on the academic performance of secondary school students in Imo State?

Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were stated to guide the study.

HO_1: There is no significant difference in the insecurity of the school environment between secondary schools in rural areas in Imo State.

HO_2: There is no significant differences between male and female students' academic performance due to the insecurity of the school environment in Imo State.

Method

The design of the study is a descriptive survey that used a questionnaire to obtain information from the respondents. This study is regarded as a descriptive survey because the researcher collected data from a large sample of students from Imo State Secondary School. It described how insecurity in school environments affected the academic performance of students in Imo State.

The targeted population was all the 2,000 senior secondary school students in the 27 Local Government Areas of Imo State who were in their senior secondary class III (SSIII) in the 2016 academic year.

The sample of the study was 200 senior secondary students who were in their SSIII. They were made up of 100 each of males and females. The study used simple random sampling, proportionate stratified random sampling, and purposive sampling techniques. Using proportionate stratified random sampling, 10 schools were selected from the 27 Local Government Areas of Imo State. Five of which were located in rural areas and five in the urban centers ensuring that at least 3 schools were selected from each of the three political zones of the state, namely: Okigwe, Orlu, and Owerri. Owerri zone had an additional one school, making it 4 due to the large number of schools in the zone. A sample of 20 students was drawn from each school, comprising 10 each of males and females.

The instrument used for data collection was a 25-item structured questionnaire entitled "Effects of Insecurity of School Environment on Academic Performance" (EISEAP). The instrument used a 4-point Likert Scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The points of 4, 3, 2, and 1 were assigned to each scale respectively in the questionnaire. The instrument comprises 3 sections. Section A consists of demographic questions, B consists of questions on insecurity and C is made up of questions on the relationship between insecurity and student's academic performance.

The measure of academic performance was the academic achievement grades of the participating students who gained admission into Nigerian universities in 2016. One hundred and two thousand, one hundred and eighty-eight (102,188) students of Imo origin took the exam, and 18.4% secured admission. The Joint Admissions Matriculation Examination (JAMB) is considered a standardized examination.

The study made use of the questionnaire; its validity and reliability were established before the researcher adapted the instrument (EISEAP). The instrument has a reliability co-efficient of 0.78. it also has a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.88 guaranteeing its internal consistency.

The instrument was administered to the students by the researcher with the help of 2 other research assistants who were briefed on how to administer the questionnaire. A teacher from the participating schools helped to gather and speak to the students. The questionnaires were all collected as the researcher waited to collect them while the students responded to the questionnaires. A t-test was used to test the null hypotheses. The mean cut-off point was 2.5. all items with a mean of 2.50 and above were regarded as agreement and accepted while those less than 2.50 were regarded as disagreement and therefore rejected. In the analysis "strongly agree" was merged with "agree" while "strongly disagree" was merged with "disagree".

RESULTS

Question One: What are the factors that constitute the insecurity of the school environment in Imo State?

Table 1: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation of the Factors Constituting School Environment/Insecurity that Affects Student's Academic Performance (N = 200)

S/N	INSECURITY FACTORS	M	SD
1	I have not suffered any form of bullying in my school	3.01	0.61
2	There is inadequate security in my school. The school compound is not fenced and protected.	3.42	0.72
3	Students properties are tampered with after school	3.30	0.75
4	I have not been sexually harassed or raped in school by teachers or senior students	2.62	0.74
5	I have not seen any student with a gun within or outside the school premises	3.20	0.76
6	I have heard gunshots around my school compound sometimes	3.21	0.76
7	There is no manifest cult activities in my school	3.64	0.92
8	Some students smoke Indian hemp and other drugs within and outside the school compound	3.24	0.17
9	There are some students gangsters in my school whose activities affect and disrupt school activities	3.42	0.72
10	There has been a case of kidnapping in my school	3.08	1.03
11	Students have been kidnapped from my school	3.07	1.04
12	Parents had come to school in the past to confront teachers who gave their children corporal punishment	3.40	1.04

13	There have been cases of violence and cult activities within our school	3.89	0.86
14	There has been a case of armed robbery attack in or near our school compound	3.45	1.04

Table 1 above shows the results obtained from answering research question one of the studies. One could rightly conclude that some factors that constitute insecurity in the school environment in Imo State which affect academic performance include parents coming to confront teachers in the school for giving their children corporal punishment with a mean of 3.40 and a standard deviation of 1.04.

Question Two: What effects does insecurity of the school environment have on the academic performance of secondary school students in Imo State

Table 2: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation of Effect of Insecurity of School Environment on Academic Performance of Students (N = 200)

S/N	AS A RESULT OF PERCEIVED INSECURITY OF THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT	M	SD
1	I feel insecure in the school	3.30	0.75
2	I have stopped school sometimes	2.98	0.78
3	I missed certain lessons due to absenteeism	3.89	0.87
4	Those lessons I missed affected me in my examination	3.16	0.70
5	I performed better in any session I did not miss school	2.94	0.76
6	I am more attentive in class anytime I feel secure	3.01	0.57
7	I avoid my teachers who have punished or sexually harassed me	3.44	0.54
8	Anytime my parents confront my teachers, I experience set-back in my academic performance	3.16	0.61
9	I will do better if my school environment is safe and secure	3.39	0.75
10	Students lose in school and academic activities	3.57	0.60
11	Students practice truancy which affects academic performance	2.92	0.87
12	Some boys join trading while girls get married and leave school due to poor performance	3.03	0.61

Results from Table 2 show the effect of insecurity of the school environment on the academic performance of secondary school students. One can conclude that as a result of perceived insecurity of the school environment students are afraid and feel insecure in the school.

It can be seen from the table that lessons missed affected examinations with a mean of 3.16 and a standard deviation of 0.70.

Hypothesis One: There is no significance in the insecurity of the school environment between secondary schools in rural and urban areas in Imo State.

The authenticity of the above hypothesis was established using t-test analysis which produced the results as shown in table 3 below.

Table 3: t-test Analysis Showing the Difference in the Insecurity of the School Environment between Rural and Urban Secondary Schools in Imo State

Location of school	N	M	SD	T	DF	P
Urban	100	26.56	5.92	4.59	998	0.04
Rural	100	24.95	5.87			

The t-test shows a significant difference between the scores of respondents from urban and rural secondary schools in Imo State. The null hypothesis was, therefore, rejected. There is a significant difference between the insecurity of the school environment between secondary schools located in urban and rural areas in Imo State as the urban secondary feel more insecure.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in male and female students' academic performance due to the insecurity of the school environment in Imo State.

The result was tested using t-test analysis and the result is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Insecurity of School Environment and Academic Performance of Students According to Sex

Location of school	N	M	SD	T	DF	P
Urban	100	25.20	5.74	4.233	998	.003
Rural	100	26.48	6.50			

The results showed that female students' academic performance (M = 26.48, SD = 6.50) was affected more than that of the male students (M=25.20, SD = 5.74) by the insecurity of the school environment. The result implies that there is a significant difference between male and female student's academic performance due to the insecurity of the school environment in Imo State.

Discussion

The study discovered that insecurity in the school environment affected the academic performance of secondary school students in Imo State. The findings revealed that students' irregular attendance at school, absenteeism, and fears resulted in poor academic performance. Some students go as far as dropping out of school which fails to achieve education goals. A vacuum in developing a conducive learning environment is unlikely to accomplish the aim of education. Poor academic scholarly execution of students concerning inward and outward assessments is one of the issues and difficulties confronting the instructive framework in Nigeria. A decent scholarly presentation would instigate inspiration and excitement in the students to accomplish high academic standing as compared to his/her mates. It achieves flexibility and ensures high achievement of the students.

The study also revealed that factors such as kidnapping, armed robbery, bullying, shooting, cult activities, rape, and school not being fenced and other factors have negative effects on the academic performance of the students. The school location had varying effects as those in urban areas were affected more than those in rural areas. The students in urban areas have more kidnap value than those in rural areas as their parents are more likely to have money to pay the necessary ransom. The findings also show that female students are affected more than male students. This confirmed the position that no society is immune to insecurity.

A school administrator, therefore needs high intellectual capacity to be able to gather security intelligence reports, and possess a good human relation to be accessible to those who could give out useful advice with regards to security information. He should possess good communication skills both formal and informal.

Conclusion

The study concludes that insecurity in the school environment affects the academic performance of secondary school students. Factors such as the use of hard drugs, absenteeism, parents' confrontation with teachers, rape, sexual harassment, bullying, absence of fencing of the school, and others result in poor performance of students.

Recommendations

Following the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made:

i. Governments, organizations and other stakeholders in education should organize workshops and trainings to equip school administrators with security skills and knowledge.
ii. Trained young and energetic men should be engaged as school security guards.
iii. Movement in and out of schools by both students and visitors should be monitored and documented. School administrators should collaborate with other relevant security outfits like the community vigilante to guarantee students' safety within and outside the school
iv. A perimeter fence should be erected around all schools in the state.
v. There should be a regular supply of electricity in schools especially at night. Close circuit boards could be installed in strategic places on the school premises as a watchdog.
vi. School administrators should also step up disciplinary measures against staff' and student's misconduct or anti-social behaviour, sexual harassment, alcoholism, use of hard drugs, hooliganism, cultism, robbery of any kind, and any conduct that poses a threat to either staff or student should not be tolerated. There should be no sacred cow in punishing offenders.

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