

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AND SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ZAMFARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between School Environment and School Adjustment among Senior Secondary School students in Zamfara State, Nigeria. Three objectives, three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study was Eight thousand one hundred and fifty one (8151) students from sixty seven (67) Schools, and a sample of 370 male and female SSII students proportionately selected. Correlational research design was used for this study. Two research instruments were used to collect data; School Environment Questionnaire and School Adjustment scale. The two instruments were validated with reliability of .76 and .81 respectively. Pearson product moment correlation statistics was used to analyze the data collected for the study. The findings revealed among others that, there is significant positive relationship between School Environment and School Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students.. The researcher concludes that relationship exists between School Environment of students and their social, academic and emotional adjustments and therefore, a positive significance relationship exists between School Environment and School Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students. Based on the findings it was recommended among others that teachers and school administrators should encourage students to adjust to changes in the environment academically, socially and emotionally.

Keywords: School Environment, Social Adjustment, Academic Adjustment
Emotional Adjustment.

Introduction

Universally, education has been seen as a central component that contributes to an individual's success in life. When a child joins school, he/she is under pressures from parents and teachers to excel in academics. For long, students have been cautioned to read hard, obtain excellent grades, and proceed to universities. The reasons for working hard in schools and how to work hard as well as the factors that predict academic achievements have continued to be areas of interest for students as well as the stakeholders in education. Educators as well as social scientists have been interesting in expatriating and exploring to the understanding of how human beings learn and acquire new knowledge as well as to examine ways by which learning and acquisition of knowledge can be maximized particularly in formal educational settings. Among these variables is School Environment as it relates to school adjustment. One of the objectives of teaching and learning in any school is to

achieve positive learning among learners through creation of enabling school environment that is friendly enough to enhance students' social, academic and emotional adjustments. The students' adjustment in schools does not depend on teachers alone but also the ways and manners various environmental inputs are coordinated and maintained for effective teaching and learning. School environment which is conducive encourages students' curiosity to learn, adapt and adjust socially, academically and emotionally thereby yielding excellent academic performances (Janga, 2025).

The school remains the first and the foremost reliable place for the social, academic and emotional development of any child. Poor school environment is likely to hinder the personality of a child from the point of his/her abilities and behavior adjustment (Pariasamy, 2021).

School Adjustment is a very important aspect of student's life. Human beings have the capacity to adapt to new situation, they do not only adapt to physical demands, but also adapt to social pressure. Secondary school students' adjustment is a phenomenon that is of great concern to educationists. Educationists need to know what they can do to help their students adjust and benefit from school (Woolfork, 2018). School adjustment is a broad construct which consists of many different aspects such as academic adjustment, social adjustment and emotional adjustment. Well-adjusted students usually value what they are learning; they are positively involved in classroom activities and receive high grades (kiuru, Nurmi, Aunola & Salmela-Aro 2019). School adjustment is a general process in which the individual changes the responses pattern of the school environment. It is the ability to adapt to the environment along with the human beings there in. Students face many adjustments challenges in schools periodically from year to year which involves changes in teachers, classrooms, schools, class rules and procedures and performance expectations, difficulties in the work and peers (Bamisaye, 2023).

Academic Adjustment refers to a child's ability to meet academic demands, to be attentive, to participate in in class activities and become an independent student while social and emotional adjustment refer to a child ability to establish meaningful and positive relationships with teachers and peers, and feel emotionally secure (Bart, Hajami, 2017).

Social adjustment refers to the individual development of social cognitive understanding that contributes to the social confidence, inter-personal relationship or sensitivity and social awareness of how the self-related to other individuals and groups in a complete social world(Thompson,2016). According to Nwoke (2024), social adjustment is an innate psychological dispositions to cope with standards, values and needs of societies in order to be acceptable, it involves coping with the new standards of the individual values, it also refers to coping with social challenges confronting one in any given situation or environment and the innate strength to accommodate any possible outcome or change.

Emotional Adjustment refers to as personal adjustment or psychological adjustment. It is the maintenance of emotional equilibrium in the face of internal and external stressors (Crow & Crow, 2020). This is facilitated by cognitive processes of acceptance and adoption. The capacity of mental health a "state" of well-being in which individual realizes his or how own abilities can cope with the normal stress of life can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make contribution to his/her own community.

Albert Bandura propounded this theory in 1977. It is based on the major premise that behavior is learned and can be unlearn and that behavior is a function of one's personality and the environment. According to him, the entire three elements: the person, the behavior and the environmental situation are highly interrelated variables each being capable of influencing the other.

The Erikson theory of psychosocial development (1963), explains fully the role of school adjustment for the child overall development. The theory focuses on stages of life and their associated challenges. For Senior Secondary School Students, the stage of Identity vs. Role confusion is crucial. It is a time when individuals seek to establish a sense of identity and belonging while exploring various roles. Successful resolution of this stage can positively impact social and academic adjustment. Students who develop a clear sense of identity tend to have better self-esteem, confidence, and motivation which can enhance their social interactions and academic adjustment. Teachers and Parents can support this by encouraging self-exploration and providing a supportive environment for identity formation.

It is noticed with uttermost concern that newly admitted SSI students find it difficult to adapt to new school environment they find themselves. This may be due to new faces of teachers, new school subjects and new friends and rules that may take them sometimes hard to cope. The researcher is a living witness to this fact through years of experience as a teacher and a lecturer for decades. Poor students' adjustment in schools most especially academic, social and emotional adjustments may be connected to with the way and manner the school environmental mechanisms are been placed in order by the stakeholders. Over the years, Government, Non-governmental Organizations, Parents-Teachers Associations, Old Students Associations have been making efforts to create a conducive school environment which is adjusted socially, academically and emotionally for better learning.

Despite all efforts of the stakeholders so mentioned, students of Secondary Schools in Zamfara State continued to find it difficult to cope up with the schools settings as observed by the researcher through years of cumulative services in Secondary Schools in Zamfara State. It is on this view, the researcher deemed it fit to examine the relationship between School Environment and School adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students in Zamfara State.

Objectives of the study

The research was guided by the following objectives which are to determine:

1. The relationship between School Environment and Social Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students in Zamfara State, Nigeria.
2. The relationship between School Environment and Academic Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students in Zamfara State, Nigeria.
3. The relationship between School Environment and Emotional Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students in Zamfara State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following questions are the research questions for this study:

1. What is the relationship between School Environment and Social Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students in Zamfara State, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between School Environment and Academic Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students in Zamfara State, Nigeria?
3. What is the relationship between School Environment and Emotional Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students in Zamfara State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in this study at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between School Environment and Social Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students in Zamfara State, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between School Environment and Academic Adjustment

- among Senior Secondary School Students in Zamfara State, Nigeria.
- There is no significant relationship between School Environment and Emotional Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students in Zamfara State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopts correlational design. in which information on at least two variables are collected in order to investigate the relationship between the variables.

The population for this research was only SS II Senior Secondary Students in Gusau educational zone in Zamfara state (that is Gusau, Tsafe, Maru and Bungudu local governments).

The total number of SS II students in Gusau educational zone is from Zamfara State Ministry of Education, Inspectorate Department, is Eight thousand one hundred and fifty one (8151) students from sixty seven (67) schools.

The sample drawn from the population was three hundred and Seventy Students (370) as suggested by Research Advisors (2006).In drawing the sample, simple random sampling was used in selecting the number of schools in the target areas. Simple Random Sampling is a method of selecting samples from the main population in which every member has equal chance of been selected from the main population (Research Advisors, 2006).

The instruments were used for data collection. The two instruments are School Environment Questionnaire (SEQ) which was adapted from the work of Kelly and Hamre (2010) with twenty six (26) items divided in two sections of school; physical facilities and School Psychosocial relationship and measured on five Likert scale Questionnaire and School Adjustment Questionnaire was measured by use of scale. The scale was measured on four point likert scale where 1=strongly disagree up to 4=strongly agree. The minimum and maximum scores of the respondents obtained were 30 and 120 respectively. Scores falling 1to 29 indicated low level of School Adjustment while scores ranging from 30 to 89 and 90 to 120 represented average and high level of School Adjustment.

The instruments were vetted by three experts in the Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria who validated the instruments by going through the face and content validity. The questionnaires were administered to the students for pilot study where 0.76 and 0.89 reliability coefficients were obtained using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and by the results, it shows that the instruments are valid and be used for the study.

The data were collected by the researcher and his research assistants from the sampled schools and the data was analyzed Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The following hypotheses have been tested and the following were the results generated:

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between School Environment and Social Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students.

Table I: Analysis of School Environment and Social Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	r value	df	p(sig)
School Environment	370	39.99	4.866	.543	365	.000
Social Adjustment	370	34.044	4.582			

Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Result of the analysis revealed that there is significant positive relationship between School Environment and Social Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students($r = .543$, $p = 0.000$). This shows that students who positively behave in school environment are usually adjusted socially in schools. Therefore the null hypothesis which states that there is no significance relationship between School Environment and Social Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students is hereby rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between School Environment and Academic Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students.

Table 2: Analysis of School Environment and Academic Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	r value	df	p(sig)
School Environment	370	39.99	8.486	.613	365	.001
Academic Adjustment	370	32.204	4.580			

Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed)

Result of the analysis revealed that that there is significant, relationship between School Environment and Academic Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students($r=.613$, $p= .001$). This shows that school environment has positive correlation with the academic adjustment. Therefore the null hypothesis which states that there is no significance relationship between School Environment and Academic Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students is hereby rejected.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between School environment and Emotional Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students.

Table 3: Analysis of School Environment and Emotional Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev	r value	df	p(sig)
School Environment	370	39.99	4.866	.281	365	.021
Emotional Adjustment	370	33.324	4.67			

Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed)

Result of the analysis revealed that there is significant, relationship between School environment and Emotional Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students($r=.281$, $p= .021$). This shows that students who positively relate with one another and with their teachers are better adjusted in schools emotionally. Therefore the null hypothesis which states that there is no significance relationship between School Environment and Emotional Adjustment in school is hereby rejected.

Discussion

The discussions of findings were done based on the findings of the study. The first finding stated that there is significant positive relationship between School environment and Social Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students in Zamfara State. This shows that, students who performed well in a school environment in school interact with school management, teachers, non-teaching staff and their fellow students amicably and have better interpersonal relationships. Thus the findings agrees with Turingan and Yang (2019), who opined that students who are socially competent, display social

attitudes in schools. In contrast, Woolfork and Woolfork (2018), found that School environment had nothing to do with the social adjustment of students in schools.

Hypothesis two found that there is significant, relationship between School environment and Academic Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students. A similar study is that of Dereje (2017), who found that there was a strong relationship between the school environment and Academic adjustment, pointing out that students who were motivated by the school environment performed academically better in schools. In Contrast, a study carried out by Kabir (2020) signifies that school environment had nothing to do with the academic adjustments of students.

The present study indicated that there is positive significant relationship between School environment and emotional adjustment among senior secondary school students in Zamfara State, Nigeria. This therefore confirms that there is positive correlation between school environment and emotional adjustment among senior students in school. This is in line with the findings of Ross (2016) who found that students lived emotionally better in schools when the school environment is favorable. But, this disagrees with the findings of Talent (2020) who posits that school environment doesn't support emotional being of students in schools.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it has been concluded that significant positive relationship exists between School Environment of students and their academic, social and emotional adjustments. Therefore, it is concluded that positive relationship exists between School Environment and school adjustment among students.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are given on the basis of findings of this research

Teachers and school administrators should encourage students to interact socially with students and teachers in the school environment.

Teachers, school psychologist, school counselors and school administrator should also encourage students on how to adjust properly to the academic, social and emotional problems in school.

Government should organize orientation and sensitization programs periodically to students on how to adapt and adjust socially, academically and emotionally in a school environment.

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