

## **Students' Academic Performance in Schools**

**Niyi Jacob Ogunode**

[Ogunodejacob@gmail.com](mailto:Ogunodejacob@gmail.com)

*Department of Educational Administration, University of Abuja, Nigeria*

**Inemesit Nsikak Edet**

[Inemesitedet994@gmail.com](mailto:Inemesitedet994@gmail.com)

*Department of Educational Management, University of Abuja, Nigeria.*

**Abstract:** This paper examined various factors responsible for poor students' academic performance in schools in Nigeria. Depending on secondary data obtained from recognized online and print resources. The paper concluded that factors responsible for poor students' academic performance in schools in Nigeria includes; presence of unqualified teacher in the schools, shortage of professional teachers, poor motivation of teachers, inadequate infrastructure facilities, poor supervision, leadership styles of school administrators, student's health status, parents and guardians socio-economic status, poor usage of instructional resources, large class size and poor classroom management practices by teachers. Based on the factors identified, the paper hereby recommended the following: Adequate funding of educational institutions. This will enable school administrator procure all human and materials resources require to ensure quality educational standard and improve students' performance. Employment of more professional teaching and special program should be organized for the unprofessional teachers to upgrade their certificates and training. Government should motivate teachers by increasing their salaries, allowances and provide conducive working environment. He should also provide adequate infrastructure facilities, instructional resources, ensure effective training program and prompt payment of their salaries. School administrators should be trained on the use of effective leadership and effective motivational strategies. Teachers should be trained on modern classroom management practices. This will help to improve their job performance and students' academic performance.

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**Keywords:** Students Academic Performance, Schools, Students.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

One of the key indicator for measuring and assessing educational institutions effectiveness is the academic performance of the students. Ricarda, Anja and Anne (2017) note that academic performance represents achievement outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in school, college, and university. Bello (2006) perceived academic performance to mean all things a learner achieves or acquires during and after undergoing some academic activities. He went

further to state that the things a learner gain can be in the form of marks obtained from a test or an examination, new skills, new techniques, behavior acquired. Bello identified some factors that might affect the academic performance of learners, such as lack of learning and teaching materials, learners' parents' attitude, level of poverty of the learners' parents, learners' experience, and conduciveness of the environment as well as teachers' poor attitude to work. Ijaiya (2004) asserted that student academic performance refers to the standard which students should be able to know and be able to do. Abdul (2002) considered academic performance as the students' level of attainment in the grade point average of courses offered in their yearly examination. In other words, it is the outcome of students' assessment through comprehensive, systematic, diagnostic, progressive, formative, summative and cumulative evaluation of what they had gone through in a school setting. It is the main focus in the overall educational performance.

For Ogunsaju (2004), student academic performance has been a major determinant of schools' effectiveness. Mullins (2005) defined effectiveness as the extent to which managers achieve the output requirement of their position. Managerial effectiveness is defined in terms of output rather than input, by what a school manager achieves rather than what he/she does. Mullins postulated two basic dimensions of perceiving academic performance. The two perspectives were "low and high". Low academic performance implies poor grade or score in test and high academic performance means good grade or score in a test or examination.

Oloyede (2008) classified students' assessment into three areas (i) cognitive (ii) affective and (iii) psychomotor. The first type of assessment is typically academic. The second is adjustment while the third entails the development of motor skills. Furthermore, students' academic performance is the achievement of student learning, mastery of curriculum and acquisition of social skills that help students to become useful and relevant in their respective societies. Similarly, Foster and Young (2004) conceptualized student academic performance as the parameter for determining the worth and carrying capacities of the students. Additionally, as pointed out by Oloyede (2008), the level of academic skill necessary for successful entry into the present day job market, with or without a university education, has risen to the point that a focus on achieving academic success is necessary for all students throughout every year of schooling from nursery/primary to the university level.

Ogunode & Josiah, (2023) defined academic performance of students as the total learning outcome of the students in the educational institutions which includes the knowledge, social and communication skills and ideas acquired and retained through their course of study. Academic performance refers to all organized educational program and knowledge a learner or student achieves or acquires in the school environment as a result of academic activities. Academic performance is the total knowledge, skills and behavior a student or learner acquires or gains from an organized test or examinations in educational institutions. Academic performance can also be viewed by Ogunode et al (2023) as the achievement of an organized curriculum, development of skills and acquisition of knowledge that can make the learner useful in society. From above, students' academic performance can be defined as the totality of student's achievement in the academic work in the school. Students' academic performance is the academic achievement of a students in a given school. Students' academic performance is the total sum of student's cognitive, affective and psychomotor achievement in the school. Many factors determine students' academic performance in school. The availability of instructional materials, teaching methods, teachers'

professional qualifications, level of infrastructure facilities, health status, motivation on teachers' and students' part, socio-economic background of the students and environment.

### **Factors Contributing to Poor Students' Academic Performance in Schools**

There are many factors responsible for poor academic performance of students in educational institutions across Nigeria. Some of the factors includes; unqualified teacher, inadequate teachers, poor motivation, inadequate infrastructure facilities, poor supervision, leadership styles, student's health status, socio-economic of parents, poor usage of instructional resources and large class size and poor classroom management practices.

### **Presence of Unqualified Teachers**

The high of unqualified teachers teaching in the various educational institutions is contributing to poor academic performance of students across the country. Lawal (2021) reported that the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) lamented that more than 50 per cent of those currently teaching in primary and secondary schools nationwide are still not qualified to be in the classroom. The Registrar and Chief Executive of TRCN, Prof Josiah Ajiboye, said it is worse in private schools. Chief Executive of TRCN noted apart from the fact that these so-called teachers, particularly those in private schools are not qualified, they are simply not registerable by the council. According to him, teachers in this category do not have basic teaching educational qualifications, which is the National Certificate in Education (NCE) as stipulated by the National Policy on Education. Teachers are critical to the human and capital development of every nation, hence their qualification and standard process must be accorded the highest form of scrutiny. The performance of teachers in classroom management depends on his or her level of experiences, professional qualifications and skills. Teachers that lacks these skills and qualifications cannot effectively manage the classroom. According to Adeyemi (2010), teachers play an important role in determining the pupils' academic performance. There has never been a consensus by researchers on the particular teacher's factors that influence students' academic achievement (Rivkin et al., 2005). A study by Njeru and Orodho, in Jude (2018) revealed that teachers' experience and educational qualifications have a significant influence on students' academic achievement. When conducting research on factors contributing to underachievement of female students in O' Level Physics examinations, Maguswi in Jude (2018) found that the lack of qualified teachers of Physics had a significant contribution. Moreover, a study done by Adaramola and Obomanu (2011) in Nigeria found that the availability of unqualified teachers led to the consistently poor performance of students in most science-related subjects. Ebietomiye in Jude (2018) noted that the success of any human endeavor especially in the field of teaching is closely related to the quality of personnel who perform the tasks in the organization. Hence, the need to recruit and utilize professionally qualified teachers in enhancing good performance in primary school education is essential. Effective teaching is enhanced by well-trained and qualified teachers. The word "teacher" crudely connotes undifferentiated meaning to the extent that any individual that transmits ideas of whatever nature that causes a change or influence the behavioral pattern of the recipient is called a "teacher".. So, from above, unqualified teachers employed in the students has native impact on academic performance of students. Teacher's professional qualification, skills and experience matters in the implementation of teaching and learning program in schools.

### **Shortage Professional Teachers**

Inadequate professional teachers in the Nigerian educational institutions has also contributed to poor academic performance of students. The shortage of professional teachers in most school in Nigeria is responsible for the overpopulation of classes. When teachers teaches too much of students there is that tender of poor academic performance. Students will not understand and concentrate on teachers due to overpopulation. The Universal Basic Education Commission revealed on its website that Nigeria had 47 million students, 171,027 schools, and 1.68 million teachers. Its 2022 National Personnel Audit breakdown showed that there were 354,651 teachers for 7.2 million students in pre-primary schools; 915,593 teachers for 32 million students in primary schools; and 416,291 teachers for eight million students in junior secondary schools. The number of registered teachers on the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria database by 2023 was 2.3 million. Studies has established that shortage of professional teachers in school affects students' academic performance. Peter (2021) noted that the understaff problems in majorities of educational institutions in Nigeria has serious implications for quality instruction and academic performance of students in the institutions. The few available qualified teachers are been overused. Many of them are always on the move from class to class to cover up. Studies show that the acute shortages in teachers are caused by poor salaries, poor work conditions, and high student-teacher ratios that put undue pressure on pedagogy and stress the teachers (Mark, 2019; James 2018). Ike (2007) attributes students' low performance in adult education studies to the lack of qualified staff. According to him, there has been an unprecedented expansion at all levels of education, which has not been matched with a corresponding increase in the number of qualified teachers. The number of qualified teachers also matter in the school system. Adequate professional teacher's with the right size of student's number in the schools aids academic performance of students. Effective implementation of teacher-students ratio policy in schools can aid students' academic performance and failure to implement it can affects students' academic performance

### **Poor Motivation**

Motivation is very critical in educational institutions. Motivation as impact on stakeholders in the schools. Poor motivation receives from principal and teachers in educational institutions is a major factor responsible for poor academic performance of students. Ogunode, Kasimu, & Ibrahim, (2023) viewed motivation as perceived as an invisible force that compel and inspire individuals towards one direction or action for a greater productivity. Motivation is the force that propelled an individual to carry out specific functions without complain. Ogunode, Okwelogu & Ahaotu, (2021) noted that teachers teaching in the Nigerian public schools are poorly motivated. Motivation is very key in educational institutions. A motivated teacher will do everything to ensure he or she discharges the responsibilities accordingly. Ogunode, (2020) pointed out that student' motivation can be in form of participation in school work, classroom tasks and freedom to expression. Praise, award, presentation of gifts, provision of instructional materials, infrastructure facilities, , provision of good working environment, maintaining high degree of relationship with teachers and management, security and care. When students are motivated there is that possibility to perform well in academic activities in the schools. It is the duties of school administrators and teachers to ensure students are motivated in the schools. Ezema, & Ogunshola, (2020) carried out a study that investigated the impact of principals' motivational techniques on students' academic performance in Federal Capital Territory (FCT) junior secondary schools, Abuja, Nigeria. The findings of this study revealed that there was a significant relationship between principals' motivational techniques and students' academic performance in FCT junior secondary schools.

The findings led the researcher to conclude that principals' motivational techniques could enhance students' academic performance in FCT junior secondary schools. So, poor motivation of students affects their academic performance in schools. Lapper, (1988) submitted that in students' motivation, classroom climate is important towards students learning, because if the students' experience the classroom environment as a caring, supportive place, where there is a sense of belonging and all students are valued and respect despite slow learning ability, he will develop interest for that subject and he will want to learn. Relevance also promote motivation to learn, as does contextualizing learning, that is helping students' see how skills are applied in the real world. Student's motivation is very important in the attainment of school objectives. When students are poorly motivated it's has implication on students' academic performance in the educational institutions.

### **Inadequate Infrastructure Facilities**

Inadequate infrastructure facilities also affects the academic performance of students across school in Nigeria. Ogunode (2020) viewed infrastructural facilities as those facilities aiding the delivery of academic and non-academic services in educational institutions. Infrastructural facilities include; libraries, laboratories, halls, offices, administrative blocks, hostels, road facilities, water, electricity, internet etc. The availability of infrastructural facilities in adequate quantities will support the effective administration of educational institutions and the inadequacies will prevent the effective administration of educational institutions. There is relationship between availability of infrastructural facilities and students' academic performance in schools. A study by Fagbohunka (2017) that underscores the infrastructural facility and the student's academic performance in Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. The paper has found out a positive relationship between the student's academic performance, power supply and health facilities. However, the internet facilities and transportation facilities were not adequate, whereas water supply was adequate. A test of the impact of infrastructural facility on the student's academic performance, using a Chi Square statistical technique revealed a significant value of 177.1 at 0.05 % level. Osuji (2016) studied the impact of school facilities on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Giwa, Zaira education zones, Kaduna State, Nigeria and found out that school facilities has impact on students' academic performance. Okoroma, Edo, & Okonko (2022) indicated that school buildings influence adult education learner's academic performance. Also, Adaja and Osagie (2015) concluded that well-planned and maintained school plant and facilities do not only enhance good teaching but facilitate easy learning. There is need for planning the school buildings and facilities, to enhance the attainment of the aims and goals for which the school is established. Mbadiwe-Woko, Ogwo and Taylor (2019) asserted that there is a strong relationship between physical facilities and enhancement of adult learning in tertiary institutions. In other words, poor performance of students in adult education has direct correlation with non-availability of school facilities. Nwanewezi (2010) maintained that school facilities have direct relationship with students' academic performance, others hold that inadequate school facilities can have adverse effect on students' performance. The non-availability of infrastructure facilities in school has implication on students' academic performance and adequate provision aids students' academic performance.

### **Poor Supervision**

Poor supervision of school by relevant institutions in Nigeria has also contributed to poor academic performance of students. Ogunode & Fabiyi (2023) and Okendu, (2012) observed that school

supervision is designed to help improve the quality of education and ensure standard and quality control. Ogunode & Ibrahim (2023) instructional supervision is a program of instruction designed to improve teachers' job performance and students' academic performance in schools. Instructional supervision is a combination of activities meant to advance the work effectiveness of teachers and other personnel in the school business. Instructional supervision is the process of improving teaching and learning in educational institutions because of realizing the goals of education. Instructional supervision is critical to the development of education. School supervision is the instrument for aid delivering of quality education. School supervision in Nigeria is ineffective. Public schools supervision are poorly done by the relevant public institutions established to supervise the schools. The present situation show that instructional supervision of education at every levels of education is weak and ineffective. Educational supervision in the Nigerian educational system have not receive maximum attention from the government. The teachers needs effective supervision to improve his or her professional skills and improve in his or her job performance. When teacher's supervision are poorly done, the implication is poor academic performance among students in the schools. Okendu, (2012a) and Ogunode & Ajape (2021) and revealed that poor supervision affects students' academic performance in schools. Also Ebiringha's (1987) confirmed that poor supervision of instruction has significant relationship with poor students' academic performance in educational institutions. Dangara, (2015) did a study on impact of instructional supervision on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Nasarawa State with reference to Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) and found out that regular instructional supervision using robust supervision strategies like checking of students' notebooks, classroom visitation/inspection by school administrators, checking teachers' lesson plan/notes and inspection of teachers record keeping have significant correlation with teachers' performance and academic achievement of students in Secondary Schools. Poor supervision of instruction in schools has impact on students' academic performance in the schools. Supervision is critical to students' academic performance in the educational institutions.

### **Leadership Styles**

School administrator's leadership styles also affects students' academic performance in Nigeria. The leadership style adopt by school leaders matter in the development of the schools. Ogunode (2023) viewed leadership styles as methods and ways leaders leads the institutions. Leadership styles refer to the behavioral approach employed by leaders to influence, motivate, and direct their followers. A leadership style determines how leaders implement plans and strategies to accomplish given objectives while accounting for stakeholder expectations and the wellbeing and soundness of their team (CFI, 2022; Ogunode 2023). Okumbe, (2008) defined leadership styles as particular behaviors applied by a leader to motivate subordinates to achieve the objectives of the organization. Leadership styles is a unique behavior or method adopt by a leader to coordinate and guide motivate subordinates to attain the objectives of the institutions. Leadership styles are organized, recognized and planned behaviors and practices used by institutions leaders to organize, control and motivate the staff to carry out their official functions in the institutions. Leadership styles are ways and strategies an organizational leaders adopt to managing and coordinate the affairs of the institutions with the aims of achieving organizational objectives. Ebebe, (2013) carried out a research on principals administrative styles as a correlate to children's academic performance in secondary school. Finding of the study reveals that principals' administrative style influences teachers' performances which directly determine how students will perform. A study by Saidu, (2017) on examination of impact of principals' leadership styles on teaching and

learning in secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, revealed that situational, transactional, transformational, democratic and charismatic leadership styles had positive impact on teaching and learning while autocratic leadership style had a negative impact on teaching and learning in secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis. Herdayati, Harapan, Tobar, & Samsonova, (2020) did a study that determined how high leadership style and lecturers' performance on students' achievement in STIKes Muhammadiyah Palembang. The results obtained disclosed that there is no effect of visionary leadership toward students' achievement, but there is an effect of lecturers' performance toward students' achievement. While tested simultaneously, the visionary leadership style and lecturers' performance toward students' achieved had significant effect. From the above, Leadership styles are very important in the realization of educational institutions program. Leadership styles determines organizational success or failure. Leadership styles are key to institutional development. Leadership styles can either makes or mar the institutional program. Students' academic performance depends on effective leadership styles of the school administrators and other factors.

### **Socio-Economic of Parents**

Parent or guardians roles and statues affects students' academic performance. Guardian or parents educational qualifications and economic and social factors as lot to do with their children academic performance in the schools. Soharwardi, Arooj, Nazir, & Abida. (2020) did a study that determine the impact of the socio-economic status of parents on the academic performance of the students. Various socio-economic factors such as family background, parental education, father income, perception of parents about their child's future, availability of public education facilities, etc. were accounted for the analysis. The data collected shows that the majority of the sample population belonged to the middle-income group. Regression analysis conducted in the study suggests that the parent's education affects their student's performance significantly. However, mother education is more vital for children's performance in academics. Moreover, strong family background and a father's income also impacts student performance significantly. We have also found that the parent's and students' personal perception about their bright future leads to better academic performance by the students. Public education facilities also lead to higher achievement rates of the students. Also, Synder (2000) asserted that the family environment is the most powerful influence in determining the child's academic achievements. It is obvious that substantial influence on a child's academic achievements. Ereke, et al (2022) submitted that the children living in the shadow of the broken home are often be wailed by coming and going by the more fact that essential relationship are not promoted or are broken off and disrupted verily impressionably. It is necessary that both parents should endeavor to bring up their children in an atmosphere of harmony.

### **Poor Usage of Instructional Resources**

Poor usage of Instructional resources by teachers and students in the implementation of teaching and learning. Instructional resources are very crucial to academic performance of students in the schools. Ogunode, & Josiah (2023) defined instructional materials are educational resource that teachers employ to present their lessons with the aims of making it simple for the learners. Instructional materials are organized educational resources that make teaching interest for the learners. Instructional materials are materials that makes students comprehend what the teaching is teaching more. Instructional materials are key component of educational institutions that help to simplify teaching. Instructional support the implementation of teaching program in the schools. Adalikwu & Iorkpilgh (2013) maintained that instructional materials serve as a channel between the teacher and the students in delivering instructions. They may also serve as the motivation on

the teaching-learning process. It is use to get the attention of the students and eliminate boredom. Instructional materials are highly important for teaching; especially for inexperienced teachers. Teachers rely on instructional materials in every aspect of teaching. They need material for background information on the subject they are teaching. Study by Abubakar (2020) confirmed that poor usage of instructional resources for implementation of teaching and learning affects students' academic performance physics, Onasanya & Omosewo (2011) confirmed that both standard and improvised instructional materials have the same positive effects on students' academic performance. Adalikwu et al (2013) did a study and concluded that students taught with instructional materials performed significantly better than those taught without instructional materials and also that the use of instructional materials generally improved students' understanding of concepts and led to high academic achievements. Also Okendu (2012) discovered that regular instructional supervision has a significant bearing on students' academic performance. He also, affirmed that adequate supply of instructional resources have significant effect on students' academic performance. Instructional resources has impact on students' academic performance in the schools. Effective usage of instructional resources support effective implementation of teaching and learning and affects performance of both teachers and students in the schools.

### **Large Class Size**

Class size is an important aspect of school that deals with numbers of students to a teachers in the classroom. Class size entails the extent to which a teachers and students are numbered in the classroom for implementation of teaching and learning program. Adeyemi, (2008) defined class size as an educational tool that can be used to describe the average number of students per class in a school. The teacher who is the classroom manager should therefore, have the number of students he/she can effectively control, supervise and teach at any given period. Lazear, (2001) argued smaller classes have less number of disruptions thereby engendering better student/teacher engagement and better student learning than larger classes. Adding more students to a class increases the number of disruptions and decreases the amount of time during which learning can take place because the teacher spends time dealing with these students that cause disruptions. Ogunode & Ahaotu (2020) observed that in Nigeria, the National Policy on Education is a general statement containing principles, regulations and rules, that govern many of the decisions on how to educate children, where to get them educated, where to get them employed, who to teach them, how to finance their education, what to teach, how to impart skills, goals, objectives and even the philosophy. The National Policy on Education is formulated and designed for regulating and control quality in the educational system in Nigeria. It is a document that contains every policies and guideline on how education should administer, managed and run in the Nigeria. One of the issues that the National Policy on Education addresses and stated clearly is the students-teachers ratio in the classroom. The policy states and prescribes a student-teacher ratio of 1:25 for pre-primary classes; 1:35 for primary and 1:40 for secondary schools. The National Policy on Education on students-teachers ratio is meant to achieve effective teaching and learning in the classroom. Effective teaching and learning is the key to achieving quality education in the country because student will learn well and understand what the teacher have taught them. Ogundipe (2003) noted that one of the most important educational policy in the Nigerian educational system is the policy on teacher-students ratio. The policy on teacher-students regulation is formulated to achieve effective teaching and learning in the classroom. Eboatu, & Ehirim, (2018) did a study to examine the perceived impact of class size on academic achievement of junior secondary school



students The results, among others, showed that class size affects students' academic achievement through interaction between teachers and students. Adeyela (2000) affirmed that, large class size is not conducive for serious academic work. In the same vein, Afolabi (2002) found no significant relationship among class size and students' learning outcomes. Yara (2010) in his study on class size and academic achievement of students in mathematics in Southwestern Nigeria found out that the performance of students in large classes was very low (23%) compared to those students in smaller classes (64%).

### **Poor Classroom Management Practices**

Poor classroom management practices by teachers in the schools as also contributed to poor students' academic performance in Nigeria. Classroom management practices refer to those behaviors and attitudes of instructors exhibited during implementation of teaching and learning in the classrooms. Classroom management practices is also those methods and styles teachers used to carry out teaching in the classrooms. Classroom management practices covers all organized activities, strategies, skills, methods and styles teachers deploy or adopt for the implementation of teaching program. Marzono and Marzono (2003) also viewed classroom management as a key to high students' educational achievements. In their studies, they found out that teachers or classroom administrators' actions in their classrooms have double the impact on students' achievement as well as schools policies regarding curriculum, assessment, staff collegiality and also community involvement. Teachers provides effective instructions, therefore,

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This paper examined various factors responsible for poor students' academic performance in schools in Nigeria. Presence of unqualified teacher in the schools, shortage of professional teachers, poor motivation of teachers, inadequate infrastructure facilities, poor supervision, leadership styles of school administrators, student's health status, parents and guardians socio-economic status, poor usage of instructional resources, large class size and poor classroom management practices by teachers are some of the factors responsible for poor students' academic performance in schools in Nigeria. Based on these factors identified, the paper hereby recommended the following:

1. Adequate funding of educational institutions. This will enable school administrator procure all human and materials resources require to ensure quality educational standard and improve students' performance.
2. Employment of more professional teaching and special program should be organized for the unprofessional teachers to upgrade their certificates and training.
3. Government should motivate teachers by increase their salaries, allowances and provide conducive working environment, provide adequate infrastructure facilities, instructional resources, ensure effective training program and prompt payment of their salaries.
4. School administrators should be training and effective use of leadership study and effective motivational strategies.
5. Teachers should be trained and modern classroom management practices. This will help to improve their job performance and students' academic performance.

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