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# Exploring Classroom Environment as a Predominant Factor Affecting Students' Academic Performance in Lagos State Junior Secondary Schools, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate the classroom environment as a predominant factor affecting students' academic performance in Lagos State junior secondary schools, Nigeria. A sample size of 250 students was drawn using both purposive and simple random sampling techniques. The instruments used for data collection were a questionnaire titled "Classroom Environment Questionnaire and tagged (CEQ)," whose reliability coefficient was found to be 0.85, and an achievement test to measure the students' academic performance. Findings from the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between class size and students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools ( $r = .829$ ), a significant relationship exists between instructional material usage and students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools ( $r = .745$ ), a significant relationship exists between school climate and students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools ( $r = .775$ ), and a significant relationship exists between classroom organization and students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State ( $r = .925$ ). It was recommended that to ensure efficient service delivery, or the teaching-learning process, the government, through the Education Districts, pledge to supply junior secondary schools with economically improved and pertinent instructional resources, as this would enhance students' academic performance in schools.

## 1. Introduction

One significant motivational element that either enhances or detracts from the method of instruction and learning seems to be the classroom setting. It is important to remember that professional teachers, who also serve as curriculum

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implementers, carry out the majority of the curriculum's implementation inside the enclosed spaces of the classroom (often within the framework of the formal school system). The status of the instructional setting may be the reason why it seems that the quality of instruction will probably have an impact on the educational outcome of many secondary school courses and learning programs (Akomolafe, 2015).

Depending on their styles, shapes, classes, and academic environments, formal classroom systems may be found in any educational institution worldwide, whether they are in developed or developing nations. As to Akomolafe (2015), the classroom setting serves as a crucial, potent, and efficient tool for socializing, bringing together students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds to facilitate learning. Without a doubt, a classroom's ability to be efficiently coordinated affects the level of teaching it provides. It is thought that a designed effectively classroom would guarantee a friendly student-teacher interaction in addition to aiding in the achievement of the intended learning objectives of education. Having enough classroom space and educational resources in an appropriate environment are some of the things that raise the bar for education in schools.

The physical aspects of a classroom, including its size, surface, buildings, desks, lighting, school layout, climate, and computer, are what are referred to as the physical environment. The physical component of the learning surroundings is the physical environment, according to Suleman, (2014). According to Lippman (2010), the real-world setting of a classroom consists of the students, instructors, and amenities. Furthermore, since they impact a school's exceptional performance, the physical attributes of the ideal educational environment play a critical part in creating a strategic aspect in the execution and functioning of teaching and learning. One of the motivating elements that is essential to raising academic success in the educational system is the availability of physical amenities (Basit, 2015).

The physical classroom environment has a big impact on students' academic performance. Classroom infrastructure guarantees a good and efficient teaching and learning process. An efficient method of instruction and learning cannot be ensured in the absence of these facilities. In well-facilitated classrooms, students often learn more from their teachers and perform better as a result. However, if the classroom environment is unfavorable and the students feel uneasy, they will likely pay split or preoccupied attention to the instruction. According to Lyons (2011), inadequate facilities in schools have an adverse influence on both the academic achievement of children and the efficacy of instructors.

The physical layout of a school environment has a big impact on the teaching and learning process, according to empirical research on the subject. It may have an impact on how well students and instructors perform. According to Basit (2015), the layout of the desks, the availability of books, and the overall design of the school have a direct impact on how well students do while using the English language. Studies by (Lyons, 2011; Tylor, 2009), among others, have shown that

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big class sizes make it harder for students to concentrate, which reduces the amount of time instructors can spend actually teaching the students.

However, class size has become a phenomenon that is often noted in research on education as having an impact on students' academic performance and socializing patterns, as well as on the administration, quality of teaching, and school finances (Akinyemi, 2020). Chuma (2012) found that a crowded classroom slows down the teaching-learning process. This is because it might be difficult for the instructor to walk about the classroom and provide each student with customized attention if they are seated at unusual angles. A well-planned classroom setting creates an ideal environment for learning for both instructors and students, and it is essential to making the educational process more successful.

Similar to this, Asiyai (2014) notes that a student's motivation and learning are greatly influenced by their classroom environment. Additionally, Maxwell (2016) discovered that student attendance and the social environment act as a mediating factor between the building quality and the students' performance. According to Suleman (2014), a lively and well-run classroom climate has a good effect on students' academic achievement. Additionally, Akomolafe (2015) notes that instructors and students often do well in a classroom setting that is supportive. Suleman (2014) investigated the relationship between the physical classroom environment and the experimental and control groups' performance. The results indicated that, in comparison to the students in the control group, the experimental group's students performed better. In the same vein, Sang (2013) found that the size of the classroom and the student-to-textbook ratio were the main causes of low math performance.

Komba (2013) define academic performance as the completion of a job that is assessed in relation to predefined benchmarks for precision, thoroughness, expense, and timeliness. Additionally, it refers to the academic activity in which learners are involved in their learning and the extent to which they fulfill the requirements established by the relevant authorities. Exams and ongoing assessments are often used to gauge academic achievement, but opinions on the most effective ways to evaluate it and what constitutes declarative knowledge-such as facts-versus procedural knowledge-such as skills-are divided. However, according to Akinyemi, (2021), academic performance may be simply defined as the culmination of an individual's academic duties as challenges, which can be reported badly or well.

The quantity of academic material a learner learns in a certain length of time is measured by student performance. Teachers must adhere to the learning objectives or instructional standards for each grade level. When instructional requirements are taught via high-quality teaching, student performance will rise. The physical layout of the educational setting has a big impact on the teaching and learning process, according to an empirical research on the subject. It may have an impact on how well students and instructors perform. Discovered that kids' academic performance is significantly impacted by the classroom climate. Scholars have ascribed the students' success to several elements both internal and external to

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their personalities (Daso, 2013; Ojera, 2018). Therefore, research on the relationship between the classroom environment and students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State's Alimosho Local Government is required.

These days, it seems that learning is discouraged in developing country classrooms. The majority of public secondary schools often have a crowded classroom. It may be challenging for instructors to instruct properly and run the class when the space is cramped and unsuitable. Students therefore often miss class. They may not pay close attention to what is being taught, they might not duplicate or update their notes sometimes, and some might not complete their academic assignments to the best of their abilities. All of these might inevitably lead to students' subpar academic performance (Akomolafe, 2015).

The study also noticed that instructors could find it challenging to engage deeply with each student and get to know them by name, background, unique characteristics, and learning challenges if the classroom setting is not up to par. These are a some of the issues and worries that made it necessary to look at how classroom environment affects students' academic performance in Lagos State's public junior secondary schools. As a result, the research examines the academic achievement of students in public junior secondary schools in Alimosho Local Government, Lagos State, as well as the classroom environment (class size, use of instructional materials, school climate, and classroom organisation).

### ***Research Hypotheses***

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

HO1: There is no significant influence of class size on students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State.

HO2: There is no significant influence of instructional materials usage on students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State.

HO3: There is no significant influence of school climate on students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State.

HO4: There is no significant influence of classroom organisation on students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State.

## **2. Methodology**

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. This is because it aids the collection of information from the target population. The method provides descriptions of the variables in order to test the research hypotheses in the study. Thus, the descriptive survey was selected because it provides the description of classroom environment and students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State.

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The target population of the study comprised all the 34 public junior secondary schools in Alimosho Local Government, Lagos State and the students therein. The sample size of this study was 250 public junior secondary students in Alimosho Local Government, Lagos State. Ten public junior secondary schools were selected using a purposive and simple random sampling techniques. In each sampled public junior secondary schools, 25 students in JSS III were selected using simple random sampling technique.

A self-structured questionnaire titled “Classroom Environment Questionnaire and tagged (CEQ)” was used for collection of data. This questionnaire was in two sections. Section A was on demographic data while section B was on the variables of the study. The questionnaire was developed in line with a six point Likert-scale type mode of response as exemplified as; Strongly Agree (6), Sometimes Agree (5), Agree (4), Disagree (3), Sometimes Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). However, the students’ academic performance was measured using achievement test. The instrument consists of 20 multiple choice items.

To ensure the instruments validity and reliability, the research instruments were developed by the researchers and given to some experts in the field of Educational Management to ascertain both the content and face validity of the instrument before the final administration of the instruments. Moreover, a test re-test method was used to test the reliability of the test items after administering the research instrument to 20 respondents who were not part of the study’s population at an interval of two weeks. The responses from the administrations was subjected to Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient and result obtained was 0.85 reliability coefficient. Inferential statistic of Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed to analyse data collected at 0.05 level of significance with the aids of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 20.0.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

#### ***Hypothesis One***

There is no significant influence of class size on students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State. It reveals from Table 1 that significant influence exists between class size and students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State with ( $r = .829$ ;  $N=250$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis which states there is no significant influence of class size on students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State was thereby rejected. Hence, there is a significant influence of class size on students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State. This finding is not shocking since the majority of researches begin with the presumption that class size would show to be a key factor in determining how successful students are. In fact, it seems that class size alone plays a significant role.

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Table 1. Pearson's Correlation Between Class Size and Students' Academic Performance in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Lagos State

		<b>Class Size</b>	<b>Students' Academic Performance</b>
Class size	Pearson Correlation	1	.829**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	250	250
Students' academic performance	Pearson Correlation	.829**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	250	250

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

This result supports Kusi's (2019) claim that class size has an impact on student academic progress, classroom management, and teaching. According to Abubakar et al. (2023), class size has a direct impact on teaching in the classroom because bigger classes force instructors to use class time for administration activities rather than instruction. It also has an impact on instruction via the relationships between teachers and students. Taha (2021) and Uhrain (2016) discovered, however, that bigger classrooms are often mentioned as making it more difficult for the instructors to preserve student discipline, leading to an emphasis on student behavior in the classroom rather than academic success. A research by Yusuf, Onifade, and Bello (2016) on the effects of class size on students' academic accomplishment supports the findings of this study by showing that students' achievement was greater in small classes and decreased in big classes. It may be concluded that class size has a major impact on the performance of students in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State's Alimosho Local Government.

### ***Hypothesis Two***

There is no significant influence of instructional materials usage on students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State. (Table 2).

Table 2. Pearson's Correlation Between Instructional Materials Usage and Students' Academic Performance in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Lagos State

		<b>Instructional Materials Usage</b>	<b>Students' Academic Performance</b>
Instructional Materials Usage	Pearson Correlation	1	.745**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	250	250
Students' Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	.745**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	250	250

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

It reveals from Table 2 that significant influence exists between instructional materials usage and students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State with ( $r = .745$ ;  $N=250$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis which states there is no significant influence of instructional materials usage on students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State was thereby rejected. Hence, there is a significant influence of instructional materials on students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State. Singh (2005), who noted that educational resources such as pictorial and graphic aids pique students' attention and help instructors better explain the topic, supports this conclusion.

Additionally, Kishore (2003) pointed out that educational resources encourage critical thinking and provide students with the chance to perform consistently in the classroom. It is important that educational tools help close the disconnect between the tangible and the intangible. In order to guarantee efficient instruction delivery, Garba (2004) exhorts instructors to make use of pertinent instructional resources. According to Okam (2013) and Adebule (2008), basic education necessitates the right use of a judicious combination of text, audio, visual, audio-visual, and other resources in order to provide efficient instruction for the betterment of both teacher and student. Basically, educational resources dictate how well students do in the classroom. When properly selected and used, they improve students' entire learning experience, aid in helping them recall material that they may have simply forgotten, and help them preserve what they have learned. It may be concluded that the use of instructional materials has a major impact on students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Alimosho Local Government, Lagos State.

### ***Hypothesis Three***

There is no significant relationship between school climate and students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Alimosho Local Government, Lagos State. (Table 3).

Table 3. Pearson's Correlation Between School Climate And Students' Academic Performance In Public Junior Secondary Schools In Lagos State

		School Climate	Students' Academic Performance
School Climate	Pearson Correlation	1	.775**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	250	250
Students' Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	.775**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	250	250

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

It reveals from Table 3 that significant influence exists between school climate and students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos

State with ( $r = .775$ ;  $N=250$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis which states there is no significant influence of school climate on students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State was thereby rejected. Hence, there is a significant influence of school climate on students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State. The results of Bergren (2014), who found that some school environment parameters such as socio economic status, attendance, and size of the school collectively have effect on students' academic achievement and instructors' work satisfaction, corroborate the conclusions of this research.

It's possible that the study's finding of a strong correlation between school climate and students' academic performance stems from the realization that learning environments have a big impact on and encourage students' motivation to learn. Because some circumstances are more favourable than others, an individual's perception of their surroundings affects how they behave in certain settings. This implies that individuals would be greatly impacted by the environment or climate of a school. Drawing from the preceding discourse, it can be inferred that the school climate has a notable impact on the academic achievement of students in public junior secondary schools located in Alimosho Local Government, Lagos State.

#### ***Hypothesis Four***

There is no significant influence of classroom organisation on students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State. It reveals from Table 4 that significant influence exists between classroom organisation and students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State with ( $r = .925$ ;  $N=250$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis which states there is no significant influence of classroom organisation on students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State was thereby rejected. Hence, there is a significant influence of classroom organisation on students' academic performance in public junior secondary schools in Lagos State.

Table 4. Pearson's Correlation Between Classroom Organisation And Students' Academic Performance in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Lagos State

		<b>Classroom Organisation</b>	<b>Students' Academic Performance</b>
Classroom Organisation	Pearson Correlation	1	.925**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	250	250
Students' Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	.925**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	250	250

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Finally, the result obtained from hypothesis four indicated that there is a significant relationship between classroom organisation and students' academic

performance in public junior secondary schools in Alimosho Local Government, Lagos State. The results of this study are consistent with those of Adeyemo (2012), Yıldız (2013), and Zein (2018), who supported the assertion that there is a broad definition of classroom management and that numerous research have produced varying conclusions that have an impact on students' academic performance. For example, it is evident that the proportion of the student population, the effectiveness of the instructors, the principal's leadership style, and the features of the school all have an impact on the results of the students.

Effective classroom management and behavior management by teachers are essential for producing high-quality learning results. This is due to the fact that instructional organization is a complex task that calls for the arrangement or disarray of activities that can necessitate or discourage certain scenarios that might occur in the educational setting. Furthermore, according to Gacheri (2012), effective classroom management encourages individual learning and accomplishment for all students in creative, tidy, and welcoming classrooms. Marzona (2008) supports this claim by stating that management of classrooms has been identified in several research papers as a significant factor influencing students' academic achievement.

This study's findings are consistent with those of Ndiyo (2011), who argued that instructors' effectiveness in managing the classroom is the single most significant factor influencing students' academic success. The outcome is also consistent with Baker's (2000) assertion that good classroom management strategies enhance students' academic achievement by supporting and facilitating good teaching and learning. Drawing from the previously mentioned discourse, it can be inferred that the arrangement of classrooms by instructors has a notable impact on the academic achievement of students at public junior secondary schools located in Alimosho Local Government, Lagos State.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The study's findings demonstrated a connection between several aspects of the classroom environment and students' academic performance. This study's conclusion is that, in public junior secondary schools, a significant factor influencing students' academic performance is the classroom climate. Thus, at public junior secondary schools in Alimosho Local Government, Lagos State, factors like as class size, instructional materials usage, school climate, and classroom organisation affect students' academic performance. However, in light of the study's findings, the following recommendations are put forward at First The government and policy makers are advised to prioritize building more classrooms and to restrict the total amount of students in a physical classroom to the forty that the Federal Republic of Nigeria recommends, as stated in her National Policy on Education.

Second The government, via the Education District, should commit to providing junior secondary schools with relevant and economically upgraded instructional

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resources in order to guarantee successful delivery of services, or the teaching-learning process. Students' academic performance in the classroom would improve as a result. Third Plans for improvements to the school made by administrators should take the school environment construct into consideration. School administrators need to find out how to engage the community in school activities and create strong bonds with it. However, school administrators should prioritize creating a good learning environment and properly overseeing teachers and students during teaching in order to increase teacher performance. The last Policies and procedures should be put in place by educators in the classroom to deter disruptive behaviour from students.

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