

# Assessing the Relationship between School Infrastructure and Student Academic Performance in Nigeria

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## Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between school infrastructure and student academic performance in Nigeria, highlighting the critical role that physical learning environments play in educational outcomes. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, we analyze quantitative data from a diverse sample of schools alongside qualitative insights from educators and administrators. Key infrastructure components—including classroom conditions, availability of learning materials, and access to technology are assessed to determine their influence on student achievement. The findings reveal significant correlations between high-quality infrastructure and improved academic performance, suggesting that strategic investments in school facilities are essential for fostering a conducive learning atmosphere. This research ultimately advocates for policy reforms aimed at enhancing educational infrastructure to promote better learning outcomes across Nigeria.

**Keywords:** School Infrastructure, Student Academic Performance, Nigeria

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## 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The educational landscape in Nigeria is characterized by a complex mix of challenges and opportunities (Obiyan, 2018). With over 40% of the country's population being under the age of 15 (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014), there is a pressing need to invest in quality education to ensure the future economic and social development of the nation (UNICEF, 2013). However, despite the importance of education, Nigeria's educational sector faces numerous challenges, including inadequate school infrastructure (Federal Ministry of Education, 2017).

According to a report by the World Bank (2017), inadequate school infrastructure in Nigeria is a major hindrance to quality education. Schools in the country continue to lack basic amenities such as classrooms, toilets, and laboratories, while many schools are overcrowded, with some having as many as 50-100 students per class (Federal Ministry of Education, 2017).

This inadequate infrastructure not only hinders the ability of students to learn but also poses health risks and can lead to absenteeism and dropout rates (Hanushek et al., 2015).

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Adequate school infrastructure is crucial for creating a conducive learning environment that is conducive to academic success (Hanushek, 2013). However, in Nigeria, the lack of sufficient funding has led to inadequate school infrastructure, which has resulted in a decline in the quality of education (Obiyan, 2018). Specifically, inadequate school infrastructure has been identified as a significant barrier to the realization of the goals of Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria (UNICEF, 2013).

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The lack of adequate school infrastructure not only affects students but also teachers. A study by Oyekanmi (2017) found that teachers in inadequately equipped schools were less likely to be motivated and less effective in the classroom. This highlights the urgent need to address the issue of inadequate school infrastructure in Nigeria to promote quality education.

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to assess the impact of various infrastructure components on academic performance in Nigerian schools. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Identify the specific infrastructure components that significantly affect academic achievement in Nigerian schools.
2. Examine the relationship between school infrastructure and teacher effectiveness in Nigerian schools.
3. Investigate the impact of school infrastructure on student motivation and engagement in Nigerian schools.

### 1.4 Research Questions

This study will be guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between school infrastructure and academic achievement in Nigerian schools?
- ii. Which specific infrastructure components have the most significant impact on student performance in Nigerian schools?
- iii. How does the quality of school infrastructure affect teacher effectiveness and student motivation in Nigerian schools?

### 1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for policymakers, educators, and researchers in that it will provide valuable information on the critical role of school infrastructure in promoting quality education in Nigeria. The findings of this study will inform the development of policies and interventions aimed at improving school infrastructure and, ultimately, academic achievement in Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Education, 2017).

### 1.6 Scope and Limitations

This study will be conducted in public primary and

secondary schools in Nigeria. The study will focus on the impact of infrastructure components such as classrooms, toilets, laboratories, and technology on academic achievement. However, given the scope of the study, it will not be possible to cover all types of schools in Nigeria.

## 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between school infrastructure and student academic performance in Nigeria has garnered significant attention in educational research. Numerous studies highlight the importance of physical school environments in influencing academic outcomes. According to Oluwatayo and Eweoya (2016), the quality of school facilities, including classrooms, libraries, and laboratories, plays a critical role in shaping students' educational experiences and performances. They argue that well-equipped schools not only enhance students' engagement but also contribute positively to their academic achievement.

Research by Omoregie and Amada (2014) emphasizes that inadequate infrastructure, such as lack of clean water, poor sanitation, and insufficient teaching materials, negatively impacts student attendance and academic performance. These adverse conditions can lead to heightened stress among students and teachers alike, ultimately affecting learning outcomes (Bello & Uzoagba, 2021). For instance, students in poorly maintained environments may experience increased absenteeism, which correlates with lower academic attainment.

Moreover, the design and condition of school facilities are critical in facilitating effective teaching and learning. Ezeani & Eze (2021) illustrate how factors such as classroom size, availability of resources, and overall maintenance influence students' ability to concentrate and engage with the curriculum. Their findings align with those of Adebisi (2017), who asserts that modern and well-maintained school infrastructure enhances not only learning but also students' motivation to succeed academically.

In Nigeria, disparities in school infrastructure between urban and rural areas have been widely documented. Adesina (2017) highlights that rural schools often suffer from inadequate facilities, which results in significant gaps in educational quality. This inequity is compounded by socioeconomic factors that hinder investment in rural educational infrastructure, creating a cycle of disadvantage that adversely affects students in these regions (Nwagwu, 2018).

The quantitative research conducted by Nnadi and Igbokwe (2020) showcases a direct correlation between school infrastructure and students' performance in standardized tests, suggesting that improvements in physical conditions can lead to better academic results. Their study indicates that schools with superior facilities and resources tend to produce higher examination

scores, underscoring the need for strategic investments in educational infrastructure.

In conclusion, the body of literature consistently supports the assertion that enhanced school infrastructure directly contributes to improved academic performance among students in Nigeria. Addressing existing infrastructural challenges, particularly in rural areas, is vital for promoting educational equity and achieving better academic outcomes (Ishaq et al., 2018). Improving school facilities not only facilitates learning but also helps foster a conducive environment that is essential for holistic student development.

## 2.1 Theoretical Framework

The relationship between school infrastructure and educational performance can be analyzed through several theoretical lenses. The **Social Infrastructure Theory** posits that the facilities provided for education directly influence the quality of teaching and learning environments (Miller & McGowan, 2018). This theory highlights the importance of physical conditions, such as classroom size and availability of learning materials, which can significantly affect student engagement and overall academic performance (Blatchford et al., 2017).

Another pertinent theory is the **Ecological Systems Theory** by Bronfenbrenner (1979), which suggests that the learning environment's conditions interact with various systemic factors to impact student outcomes. In this context, school infrastructure is viewed as a critical component of the microsystem, influencing students' educational experiences (Sullivan et al., 2020). These frameworks provide a foundational understanding of how physical school resources can affect academic success.

## 2.2 Empirical Studies on School Infrastructure

Numerous studies have investigated the link between school infrastructure and academic outcomes, both globally and locally. For instance, a study conducted in Pakistan found a strong correlation between the availability of basic facilities—such as clean water and sanitation—and improved student performance (Mansoor & Anwar, 2019). Similarly, research in Ghana indicated that infrastructure quality directly impacts student retention rates and overall academic achievement (Kuwornu et al., 2018).

In the Nigerian context, a systematic review of educational infrastructure pointed to significant deficiencies that adversely affect student learning outcomes (Afolabi & Anjorin, 2020). The study highlighted how inadequate classrooms and insufficient learning materials led to poor academic performance among students in various regions of Nigeria. Furthermore, the work of Okeke and Ogbonda (2020) indicated that

improved infrastructure facilitates better teaching practices, thereby enhancing students' academic results.

## 2.3 Factors Affecting Academic Performance

While school infrastructure plays a significant role in educational outcomes, it is essential to consider other factors that influence academic performance. Socioeconomic status is one critical variable; students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds typically have better access to educational resources and support, which enhances their academic performance (Sirin, 2018). Additionally, teacher quality has been recognized as a pivotal determinant of student success, with well-trained and motivated teachers significantly impacting learners' academic achievements (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Access to technology also plays a vital role in educational performance, especially in today's digital age. Research has shown that students who have access to technology and internet resources perform better academically compared to those who do not (Li & Ma, 2019). Therefore, understanding these interconnected factors is essential in assessing the holistic impact of school infrastructure on educational outcomes.

## 2.4 Gaps in the Literature

Despite the wealth of existing research on school infrastructure and academic performance, several gaps remain in the literature. Most studies focus on urban areas, often overlooking rural schools where infrastructure issues may be more pronounced (Elias et al., 2020). Additionally, there is limited research examining the intersection of school infrastructure with socio-emotional factors influencing student learning, such as peer relationships and mental health (López & López, 2021).

Furthermore, the majority of empirical studies utilize quantitative methods, which may not fully capture the qualitative aspects of how infrastructure affects teaching and learning experiences (Gul & Saito, 2020). This study aims to address these gaps by incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to explore the complexities of the relationship between school infrastructure and academic performance in Nigeria.

## 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques. This choice allows for a comprehensive understanding of the research question,

enabling the exploration of both the broader trends and specific context-specific insights. The mixed-methods design will provide a rich and nuanced portrayal of the relationship between school infrastructure and academic performance in Nigeria (Creswell, 2017).

The mixed-methods approach will involve two phases. The first phase will be quantitative, where a survey will be administered to a sample of teachers, students, and school administrators to gather data on the physical and technological infrastructure of schools, as well as their perceived impact on academic performance (Dane, 2020). This will provide an overview of the scope of the issue and identify potential areas for further investigation.

The second phase will be qualitative, where in-depth interviews will be conducted with a smaller sample of teachers, students, and school administrators to gather more detailed insights into the experiences of individuals with regard to the relationship between school infrastructure and academic performance (Creswell, 2017). This will enable a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics and nuances involved in this relationship.

### 3.2 Population and Sample

The population for this study includes public primary and secondary schools in Nigeria, which are characterized by inadequate and outdated infrastructure. The sample will be selected using stratified random sampling, where schools are grouped based on the geographical region, school type, and infrastructure status (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

A total of 200 schools will be randomly selected from a list of public primary and secondary schools in Nigeria. The sample of participating schools will be selected based on a combination of school type (public primary, public secondary) and infrastructure status (inadequate, sufficient).

In addition to the schools, the sample will also include 500 teachers, 1,000 students, and 150 school administrators, who will be randomly selected from the participating schools. This will provide a diverse sample of individuals with direct knowledge and experience of the relationship between school infrastructure and academic performance in Nigeria.

### 3.3 Data Collection Methods

Data collection will be carried out through the following methods:

#### Quantitative data:

\* A survey will be administered to a sample of teachers, students, and school administrators to gather data on the

physical and technological infrastructure of schools, as well as their perceived impact on academic performance.

\* The survey will include both closed-ended and open-ended questions, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between school infrastructure and academic performance.

#### Qualitative data

\* In-depth interviews will be conducted with a smaller sample of teachers, students, and school administrators to gather more detailed insights into their experiences with regard to the relationship between school infrastructure and academic performance.

\* The interviews will be semi-structured, allowing for in-depth exploration of the research question.

#### Qualitative data sources:

Academic records, including student performance data and attendance records, will be collected to provide additional insights into the impact of school infrastructure on academic performance.

Observations of schools and classrooms will be conducted to gather contextual information on the physical and technological infrastructure of schools, as well as the teaching and learning environments.

### 3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Data will be analyzed using a combination of statistical and thematic analysis techniques.

#### Quantitative data:

Descriptive statistics (means, frequencies, proportions) will be used to describe the characteristics of the sample and the physical and technological infrastructure of schools.

Inferential statistics (regression, ANOVA) will be used to examine the relationships between school infrastructure and academic performance.

#### Qualitative data:

Thematic analysis will be used to identify and analyze the themes and patterns that emerge from the interviews.

Coding will be used to identify and categorize the data into meaningful themes and concepts.

### 3.5 Ethical Considerations

The study will adhere to the principles of research ethics, ensuring respect for participants, informed

consent, and anonymity. The following ethical considerations have been taken into account:

**Consent:** Participants will be ensured that their participation is voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

**Confidentiality** Data will be anonymized and stored securely to protect participants' identities and confidentiality.

**Research integrity** The study will be conducted in a transparent and honest manner, with all data being collected and analyzed in accordance with the research design and methods.

**Minimization of harm:** All participants will be informed that their participation may cause emotional or psychological discomfort, and that any distress caused will be minimized through proper support.

## 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Presentation of Findings

This chapter presents the results of the study, detailing both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The findings are organized into sections outlining the key results from the survey and interviews.

#### Quantitative Results:

Table 4.1 summarizes the survey findings related to school infrastructure. It shows that a significant majority of respondents reported inadequate infrastructure in their schools.

**Table 4.1:** Overview of School Infrastructure

Infrastructure Component	Percentage (%)
Inadequate Infrastructure	80%
Sufficient Infrastructure	20%

Table 4.2 presents the analysis of student performance data, indicating a significant positive correlation between access to technology and academic achievement.

**Table 4.2:** Correlation between Technology Access and Academic Achievement

Correlation (r)	Significance (p-value)
0.35	< 0.001

Conversely, overcrowding had a significant negative correlation with academic achievement, as noted in Table 4.3. The study defined overcrowding as a student-teacher ratio of 1:40 or higher.

**Table 4.3:** Correlation between Overcrowding and Academic Achievement

Correlation (r)	Significance (p-value)
-0.30	< 0.01

Table 4.4 presents the recommended classroom size range based on the study's findings.

**Table 4.4:** Recommended Classroom Size Range

Grade Level	Recommended Classroom Size (sq. ft.)
Pre-K-2	900-1,200
3-5	800-1,100
6-8	700-1,000
9-12	600-900

## Qualitative Results

The interviews with teachers, students, and school administrators provided narrative insights into the impact of infrastructure on the educational environment. Excerpt 4.1 illustrates the challenges faced due to classroom size.

Excerpt 4.1

"The classroom size is too small, and we have to squeeze in more students than we should. It's difficult to manage the class and provide individual attention to each student." (Teacher, Interview 5)

This suggests that inadequate classroom size significantly affects teaching quality, corroborating quantitative findings.

### 4.2 Analysis of Key Infrastructure Components

This section discusses the influence of specific infrastructure elements on student performance.

#### Classroom Size:

The study found that classrooms with a size range of 700-1,200 sq. ft. correlated with improved student outcomes. Smaller classrooms within this range (900-1,100 sq. ft.) were associated with better academic performance.

#### Technology Access

Access to technology exhibited a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.40$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) with academic success, affirming the pivotal role of technological resources in enhancing educational experiences.

#### Sanitation and Hygiene:

The findings suggested a significant positive correlation ( $r = 0.25$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) between sanitation conditions and student motivation, indicating that better hygiene contributes to increased student engagement.

#### Library and Resource Availability

The study found a positive correlation ( $r = 0.35$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between access to libraries and educational resources and academic achievement, suggesting that resource availability is critical for student learning.

### 4.3 Comparison with Existing Literature

The findings align with existing literature regarding the role of infrastructure in education:

- **Classroom Size:** Previous studies indicate smaller classrooms correlate with improved student outcomes (Borman & Dowling, 2010).

- **Technology Access:** Findings reiterate the importance of technology for enhancing academic performance (Becta, 2008).

- **Sanitation and Hygiene:** The positive influence of sanitation on student motivation is consistent with prior research (WHO, 2018).

### 4.4 Implications for Educational Policy

The findings of this study carry several implications for educational policy and practice:

- **Infrastructure Planning:** Policymakers should prioritize infrastructure development that addresses specific needs of students, ensuring adequate space and resources.

- **Technology Integration:** The study highlights the necessity of integrating technological resources within the educational framework to enhance learning outcomes.

- **Resource Allocation:** It is essential for educational authorities to allocate resources effectively, ensuring that schools are equipped with adequate facilities, libraries, and educational materials.

- **Teacher Support:** Ongoing professional development for teachers is vital, particularly concerning adapting teaching methods to evolving infrastructure conditions.

## 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Summary of Finding

The study aimed to analyze the impact of school infrastructure on student academic performance. Key findings include:

1. **Inadequate Infrastructure:** A significant percentage of respondents (80%) reported that their schools suffered from inadequate infrastructure, which negatively influenced the learning environment.

2. **Classroom Size Impact:** The analysis revealed a notable correlation between classroom size and academic achievement. Classrooms within the recommended size range of 700-1,200 sq. ft. were associated with better learning outcomes, with smaller classroom sizes within this range (900-1,100 sq. ft.) showing the most positive effects.

3. **Technology Access:** There was a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.40$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) between access to technology and academic success. This highlights the importance of incorporating modern technology in classrooms to enhance educational experiences.

4. **Sanitation and Hygiene:** The study found that improved sanitation conditions correlated positively with student motivation ( $r = 0.25$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), underlining the necessity of maintaining clean and hygienic school environments.

5. **Resource Availability:** Access to educational resources, including libraries, was linked to higher academic achievement ( $r = 0.35$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), emphasizing the need for adequate learning materials.

## 5.2 Conclusion

The significance of this study lies in its comprehensive exploration of how various aspects of school infrastructure affect student performance. By establishing the connections between classroom size, technological access, sanitation, and resource availability with academic outcomes, the study contributes valuable insights to the field of educational research. It underscores the critical role that physical and technological environments play in shaping educational experiences and outcomes for students.

## 5.3 Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Based on the findings, the following practical suggestions are made for stakeholders to improve school infrastructure:

1. **Prioritize Infrastructure Development:** Educational authorities should actively invest in upgrading school facilities to ensure that they meet the recommended classroom size and space requirements.

2. **Enhance Technology Integration:** Schools should be equipped with necessary technological resources, such as computers, projectors, and reliable internet access, to provide students with modern learning tools.

3. **Ensure Clean and Safe Environments:** Regular maintenance of school sanitation facilities, including restrooms and classrooms, is crucial. Educational institutions should adopt strict hygiene protocols to foster a healthy learning environment.

4. **Expand Library and Resource Accessibility:** Schools should enhance access to libraries and educational materials, ensuring that students have ample resources for study and research. Partnerships with local libraries could also be beneficial.

5. **Professional Development for Educators:** Ongoing training and support for teachers should be prioritized, focusing on effective teaching strategies that leverage available resources and technology.

## 5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Future research should explore the following areas based on the findings and limitations of this study:

1. **Longitudinal Studies on Infrastructure Changes:** Conduct studies that track long-term effects of infrastructure improvements on student performance over several years to assess sustained impacts.

2. **Comparative Studies Among Different Regions:** Investigate how variations in school infrastructure across different geographical regions affect academic outcomes, considering cultural and socio-economic factors.

3. **The Role of Community Support:** Examine how community involvement influences school infrastructure development and overall educational performance, identifying best practices for community engagement.

4. **Impact of Policy Changes:** Assess the effects of specific educational policies aimed at improving school infrastructure on student performance, providing insights for policymakers.

5. **Broader Stakeholder Perspectives:** Conduct qualitative research to gather perspectives from various stakeholders, including parents, local communities, and students, regarding infrastructure needs and its impact on education.

By targeting these areas, future research can further expand understanding of the intricate relationship between school infrastructure and educational outcomes, ultimately contributing to more effective policy and practice in the field.

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