Influence of Environmental Concept on Academic Performance Of Post Graduate Students in Rivers State University and Its Counselling Implication

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ABSTRACT
The study examined the Influence of environmental concept on academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University. To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher developed three (3) specific objectives, three research questions and three null hypotheses respectively guided the conduct of the study. The research design used for the study was a descriptive research design. The population of this study was made up of all the Business Education post graduate students in Faculty of Education, Rivers State University with a total population of 159 post graduate students. The sample size of this study comprised all the post graduate students of Faculty of Education Rivers State University with a total sample size of 159 post graduates students. The total enumeration sampling techniques was adopted for the study due to the manageability of the population size. The instrument used for the data collection was self-structured questionnaire. The data gathered were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using t-test statistical tool at 0.05 level of significant. The findings of the study reveals that school physical environment, school academic environment and school classroom social environment influence academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends that: University authority or administration should provide adequate infrastructures that can carter for the physical needs of the student to enhance their performance, Since educational facilities play fundamental role in improving the educational outcomes of students, it is therefore, strongly recommended that university administration should provide adequate educational facilities for the students to enhance their academic performance and Lecturers and students should endeavour to create a friendly teaching-learning environment to enhance students' academic performance.
Keywords: Environmental concept, academic performance, students, physical environment, academic environment, classroom social environment

INTRODUCTION
Education is a life-wire and asset to any nation. It is one of the focal reasons why Nigeria in particular invests in education. It is stated in the Nigerian National Policy on Education that, "The Federal Government of Nigeria has concluded that every Nigerian child shall have a right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities, each according to his or her ability;

education shall continue to be highly rated in the National Development Plans because education is the most important instrument of change; any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution (NPE, 2014). Therefore, if a good education is necessary for the attainment of developmental strides in Nigeria, then there is need to search for variables which can make a difference in learning and generally improve academic performance.

However, different variables or factors are capable of influencing the academic performance of University students in general and the freshmen in particular - factors such as environments, (home and school environment) and the students' self-concept. Such factors also may be the student's internal state (intelligence, state of health, motivation, anxiety) and their school environment (availability of suitable learning environment, adequacy of educational infrastructure like well-equipped libraries and laboratories). Investigation on these factors has produced several findings: for example, Essien (2014) and Usoro (2017) have attributed the cause of poor academic performance to a combination of personal and institutional factors. Personal factors relate to the individual's intelligence, knowledge and ability. Institutional factors on the other hand, are family or parental influences, societal influences, institutional influences and school related factors-students and lecturer rapport, teacher related factors, accommodation and living conditions.

The factors that influence academic performance of students have attracted the interest and concern of counselors, psychologists, lecturers, researchers and school administrators in Nigeria. This is because of public outcries concerning the standard of education including University education in the Rivers State. It is therefore, important that the students should be counselled on the need to take their studies seriously right from the inception, so that they can graduate with a worthwhile certificate. It is in the light of this, that it is important for counseling services, to be organized for these students such as, orientation programme for freshmen, administrative interaction with a view to adjust to the new environment and taking their course of study seriously. There is, therefore, need for a continual search for means and strategies for improving performance and learning among students. For the achievement of making students take their studies serious from the onset, there is need therefore, to identify the factors that account for poor academic performances so that those factors may be harnessed to maximize students' progress and performance.

Studies by Akpan (2016), Essien (2014) and Usoro (2017) on Environment and self-concept mainly focused on the secondary and basic (primary) levels of education. Although, these studies provided evidence on the role the home and the school environment, as well as, self-concept play on academic performance. However, very little is known about how these variables affect students' performance, particularly, the University post graduate academic performance. This missing gap is what drew the researcher's attention to the topic under study influence of environmental concept on Academic Performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University.

LITERATURE REVIEW
School environment (physical environment) and student's academic performance
Education reform has focused primarily on teaching methods and course content. As a result instructional materials have been updated and instructional methods improved. However, what has received too little attention is the physical environment in which education occurs. Highly qualified teachers do not want to work in outdated, unattractive facilities. Parents are much more discerning about which school their child will attend, including the physical appearance of the school and modern technology available. School systems have discovered that school with "sick" internal physical environment has adverse effect on student learning and teacher performance. There are a growing number of studies linking student outcomes whose physical environments supports the educational process. A growing understanding of how our learning environments affect people suggests that a school building is an important tool for learning and teaching, and like any tool, can enhance or hinder the process. Location is a very important force in a students' intellectual development and in agreement with this idea, Farrant (2010) stated that much of the reliable variance to academic performance can be attributed not only to aptitude of the learner but also (and more importantly too) to the stimulation of the physical environment.

The physical environment according to James (2017) is made up of the classroom space, furniture, light, temperature and sound in virtually exhaustive. James explains that classrooms are instructional spaces conceived in terms of size or volume, usually considered adequate in terms of number of square feet. It is the flexibility of the space that is said to determine its quality. It is possible to use rooms of the same size but different shape for different purposes. Classroom should provide for activity options, such as isolated noisy places and quiet places. Both big and small classrooms are necessary for the teachers' effective discharge of his duties. James described the goal of lighting as the provision of adequate illumination with proper balanced brightness. Lighting, which enhances the environment to support the teaching aids, should be flexible, glare-free, well distributed and steady. Wilkins (2017) holds that each environment plays a part in shaping the development of the child. In this respect, a child who gets from his/her environment all he needs develops best and therefore achieve more academically. It is obvious that there is a marked deficiency between urban location when compared to rural location regarding academic performance and socialization. Consequently, the academic performance of the child could be improved upon by exposing him/her to suitable learning facilities. These facilities which were provided for the school by the ministry of education, local education authority or the school itself will improve or enhance the school's achievement.

School classroom social environment and student academic performance

The term environment may be seen as an aspect of the organism surrounding to which it is responding to at a given time. In this case, man refers to his respond; to aspect of his surrounding to things such as he can see, touch, smell, taste and feel. Stones in his explanation maintained that from his surrounding or from his internal environment that is from within the school setting external to the individual that tend to influence his learning, as well as academic performance. Cokely (2012) observed that school as a system is comprised of people, buildings, cafeterias, libraries, audios, visual aids, administrative rules and procedure and so forth, all coordinate so that the purpose of that system are accomplished. They went on to say that the school environment requires a clear statement of purpose and a proper interrogation in coordination of the environment so that it accomplishes its purposes. He further stated that school houses like other building have throughout been designated primarily as shelter to provide protection against unfriendly and uncomfortable natural environment. He went on to say that environmental planners measures and evaluates a building performance primarily by the impact it has on human behaviour and academic performance. He posits that students learn more in a good thermal environment than a poor one. He further maintained that a school environment is one whose learning space and facilities fosters as units of a total school environment that enhances students' academic performance.

Moreso, James (2017) also supports the finding that the interior classroom environment influences behaviour as well as performance, adding that it facilitate effective execution of teachers' programme, or may impede progress or preclude the desired outcomes. She advises that it is important to ensure that the classroom is not near to busy thoroughfare. Sometimes, it may be necessary to reposition a child who is showing attention problem, which may not be near the teacher's desk, a place that is very busy. She views the best classroom arrangement as one that ensures that every child sees the teacher's face as he talks, and were children can work without disturbing each other. She also found that there is higher productivity when children are sitting in rows than in groups around tables. Sitting in rows prevented incidental conversations due to less eye contacts, but they could see the teacher by looking forward.

Class control consists of these, the teacher instructional procedure, correcting the learners and motivation. In instructional procedure James (2017) prefers infrequent shouts to retain its impact for getting attention, and avoid presenting a bad model. To improve control, teachers can adopt a number of strategies to improve learners' performance. Preventing students from making errors is not motivating. Learners become capable of avoiding errors they have made. Making errors is an important part of the learning process (Brophy & Good, 2010) recognizes the teachers' personality and classroom behaviour as powerful motivational tool. So teachers should model cheerful disposition, friendliness, sincerity, emotional maturity and other characteristics indicating good mental health and personal adjustment. These will make the learners to admire them, value their opinion and trust them, all of which enhances classroom activities and academic performance.

School academic environment and students' academic performance

In line with the finding of the study, Cokely (2012) opined that an average secondary/primary school teacher takes time and trouble to write comments thought to be encouraging in student papers rather it discouraged some students effort toward positive academic performance. This finding will guide lecturers or teachers to be careful with what they say to students and what they write in their exercise books because some comments can discourage them and make them perform academically negative or poor. Cokely (2012) opined that some of the difficulties which students encounter in school to perform academically: the teachers' view of student, his or her expectation and dealing with them. Cokely further opined that teachers in Africa no matter their experience in teaching turn their classroom into small prisons where students are treated as inmates demanding extreme loyalty and exercising supreme authority over the students. Such classroom cannot only be boring to students but also threatening because any little mistake is bound to be treated as a serious offence. Academically students may tend to perform poorly in such classroom.

Moreso, John (2010) asserts that if a student has positive perception about teachers and school work it is almost inevitable that the student will perform academically positive. While a negative perception toward school and teachers will lead them to perform negatively. He further maintained that space in the three dimensionality of a building and the classroom is such as space. Its space and facilities, formatives and equipment are the tools for its functioning. It physical designs like that of any space is related to and determine the academic performance of students a good task stimulates a student in the classroom. The teacher as the classroom manager is responsible for every activities that goes on in the school environment. He or she has to plan, organize, coordinate, direct, lead and control the activities that occur within and outside the classroom to motivate students towards academic performance. This implies that a warm environment devoid of harsh words could improve the students' academic performance.

Statement of the problem

As post graduate students, the expectations of the parents and the lecturers are that they are supposed to do very well in their academic work, including General Studies and Communication Skills GSS courses. Regrettably, the scores of students' in the use of English have been very discouraging. This thus underscores the need for a study of this nature to address factors that could better explain this situation. Since the home and school environment, as well as self concept plays a crucial role in students academic performance, there is need for a study to explain performance from the perspective of the home and school environment; and also self concept. It is against this background therefore, that this study seeks to investigate the influence of environmental concept on Academic Performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the influence of environmental concept on Academic Performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University.

. Specifically the study seeks to:

1.   Examine the extent school physical environment has influence on academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University.
2.   Determine the extent school academic environment has influence on academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University.
3.   Examine the extent school classroom social environment has influence on academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University.

Research questions

The under-listed research questions were generated to guide the study.

1   To what extent has school physical environment influence academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University?
2   To what extent has school academic environment influence academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University?
3   To what extent has school classroom social environment influence academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

1. There is no significant difference on the mean ratings of the male and female respondents on the extent has school physical environment influence academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University.

2. There is no significant difference on the mean ratings of the male and female respondents on the extent has school academic environment influence academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University.

3. There is no significant difference on the mean ratings of the male and female respondents on the extent has school classroom social environment influence academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted in conducting this study was the survey design. According to Isangedighi, Joshua, Asim and Ekuri (2014), the essence of a survey design is to make inferences about the population under study using the sample drawn from that population. The study adopted the survey design because the researcher only made use of a representative sample of the population from where generalizations of the study results were made. Also this method is preferred because of its descriptive nature, as it involves the collection of data to accurately and objectively describe existing phenomena. The population of this study was made up of all the Business Education post graduate students in Faculty of Education, Rivers State University with a total population of 159 post graduate students. The sample size of this study comprised all the post graduate students of Faculty of Education Rivers State University with a total sample size of 159 post graduates students. The total enumeration sampling techniques was adopted for the study due to the manageability of the population size. The research instruments utilized in this study was questionnaire. The instrument was divided into two sections A and B. Section A consisted of the demographic data of the respondents such as name of department, class level and family size. Section "B" dealt with the subject matter. The researcher personally visited the faculty selected for the study and administered copies of the questionnaires to the students with the help of two research assistants. After collecting the questionnaire, codes/scores were assigned to each item. For ease of data preparation, a coding schedule was prepared by developing a key for each of the constructs in the instruments in a tabular form. The scores of the students that participated in responding to the questionnaire were extracted.

RESULTS

Table 1: Independent t-test analysis of the extent has school physical environment influence academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University

Variables	N	X	SD	t-cal
Male PG Students	57	2.55	0.75	1.14
Female PG Students	102	2.80	0.86	

p > .05; df = 159; critical t = 1.96

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference on the mean ratings of the male and female respondents on the extent has school physical environment influence academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University. This null hypothesis was tested using independent t-test analysis. The result of the analysis is presented.

The analysis on table 1 above showed that the calculated t-value of 1.14 was found to be less than the critical t-value of 1.96 when tested at 0:05 level of significance with 195 degrees of freedom. This result is significant implying that there is no significant difference in the mean academic performance of post

graduate students from poor school physical environment and rich school physical environment Therefore the null hypothesis was accepted and retained.

TABLE 2: Independent t-test analysis of the extent has school academic environment influence academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University.

Variables	N	X	SD	t-cal
Male PG Students	57	2.70	0.80	1.65
Female PG Students	102	2.90	0.88	

p > .05; df = 159; critical t = 1.96

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference on the mean ratings of the male and female respondents on the extent has school academic environment influence academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University. This null hypothesis was tested using independent t-test analysis. The result of the analysis is presented.

The analysis on table 2 above showed that the calculated t-value of 1.65 was found to be less than the critical t-value of 1.96 when tested at 0:05 level of significance with 195 degrees of freedom. This result is significant implying that there is no significant difference on the mean ratings of the male and female respondents on the extent has school academic environment influence academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University. Therefore the null hypothesis was accepted and retained.

TABLE 3: Independent t-test analysis of the extent has school classroom social environment influence academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University.

Variables	N	X	SD	t-cal
Male PG Students	57	2.70	0.80	10.68
Female PG Students	102	2.80	0.86	

p > .05; df = 159; critical t = 1.96

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference on the mean ratings of the male and female respondents on the extent has school classroom social environment influence academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University. This null hypothesis was tested using independent t-test analysis. The result of the analysis is presented.

The analysis on table 3 above showed that the calculated t-value of 1.68 was found to be less than the critical t-value of 1.96 when tested at 0:05 level of significance with 195 degrees of freedom. This result is significant implying that there is no significant difference on the mean ratings of the male and female respondents on the extent has school classroom social environment influence academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University. Therefore the null hypothesis was accepted and retained.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS
Extent to which school physical environment influence academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University
The finding of the study showed that there is no significant difference between the mean academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University school environment and rich school physical environment. This could be interpreted to mean that school with "sick" internal physical environment has adverse influence on students' learning and teachers' performance. Academic performance cannot be attributed only to aptitude of the learner but also to the stimulation of the physical environment. This result is in agreement with Wilkins (2015) who ascertained that each environment

plays a part in shaping the development of the child. In this respect, a child who gets from his/her environment all he needs develops best and therefore achieve more academically. It is obvious that there is a marked deficiency between urban location when compared to rural location regarding academic performance and socialization. Consequently, the academic performance of the child could be improved upon by exposing him/her to suitable learning facilities. These facilities which were provided for the school by the Ministry of Education, Local Education Authority or the school itself will improve or enhance the school's achievement. Also in line with the study, Farrant (2010) stated that much of the reliable variance to academic performance can be attributed not only to aptitude of the learner but also (and more importantly too) to the stimulation of the physical environment.

Furthermore, James (2017), asserted that the physical environment is made up of the classroom space, furniture, light, temperature and sound in virtually exhaustive. James explains that classrooms are instructional spaces conceived in terms of size or volume, usually considered adequate in terms of number of square feet. It is the flexibility of the space that is said to determine its quality. It is possible to use rooms of the same size but different shape for different purposes. Classroom should provide for activity options, such as isolated noisy places and quiet places. Both big and small classrooms are necessary for the teachers' effective discharge of his duties. James described the goal of lighting as the provision of adequate illumination with proper balanced brightness. Lighting, which enhances the environment to support the teaching aids, should be flexible, glare-free, well distributed and steady. This result implies that institutions with poor internal school physical environment has adverse effect on students' academic performance. This growing understanding on how our learning environments affects students suggests that a school building is an important tool for learning and teaching, and like any tool, can enhance or hinder the process. Therefore government should be able to put good infrastructures in place to enhance academic performance of the university freshmen.

Extent to which school academic environment influence academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University.

The finding of the study showed that there is significant no difference between the mean academic performance of university post graduate students from poor school academic environment and rich school academic environment. This could be attributed to the fact that the students from the rich school academic environment had positive perception of their teachers and school work, hence their positive performance. This implies also that a warm environment devoid of harsh words can improve the students' academic performance. The result of this hypothesis agrees with Cokely (2012) posited that school as a system is comprised of people, buildings, cafeterias, libraries, audios, visual aids, administrative rules and procedure and so forth, all coordinate so that the purpose of that system are accomplished. The author went on to say that the school environment requires a clear statement of purpose and a proper interrogation in coordination of the environment so that it accomplishes its purposes. The study also corroborate John (2010) who observed that school houses like other building have throughout been designated primarily as shelter to provide protection against unfriendly and uncomfortable natural environment. He went on to say that environmental planners measures and evaluates a building performance primarily by the impact it has on human behaviour and academic performance. He posits that students learn more in a good thermal environment than a poor one.

Furthermore, John (2010) maintains that discipline is the observance of arbitrary rules or convention devised to govern social relations in a particular situation. Discipline is the training that produces order lines, obedience and power of cooperation in students. A discipline student is measured by factors such as attentiveness, submissiveness to his teacher and willingness to work hard, refrain from activities that interfere or disrupt other students' tasks or academic performance. He further opines that school environment consist of the social environment of such influences that are as a result of relationship among the individuals, groups, and norms in the classroom. The various social classroom environment factors include class size, class organization and class control. Class size is a major determining factor of classroom behaviour.

Extent to which school classroom social environment influence academic performance of post graduate students in Rivers State University

The finding of the study showed that there is no significant difference between the mean academic performance of university post graduate students from poor school classroom social environment and rich classroom social environment. This indicates that a warm and friendly teacher-students classroom social environment can enhance academic performance of the students. This result is supported by John (2010) who maintains that space in the three dimensionality of a building and the classroom is such as space. Its space and facilities, formatives and equipment are the tools for its functioning. It physical designs like that of any space is related to and determine the academic performance of students a good task stimulates a student in the classroom. The teacher as the classroom manager is responsible for every activity that goes on in the school environment. He or she has to plan, organize, coordinate, direct, lead and control the activities that occur within and outside the classroom to motivate students towards academic performance. (Brophy, 2010) recognizes the teachers' personality and classroom behaviour as powerful motivational tool. So teachers should model cheerful disposition, friendliness, sincerity, emotional maturity and other characteristics indicating good mental health and personal adjustment. These will make the learners to admire them, value their opinion and trust them, all of which enhances classroom activities and academic performance. This result indicates that lecturers and students should be able to create a friendly environment as this will certainly enhance students' academic performance.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that Environmental factors and self-concept are significant predictors of University freshmen's academic performance. It was also concluded that parental socio-economic background has a significant influence on University freshmen's academic performance. Also parental family size, parenting style, school physical environment, school academic environment and school social classroom environment significantly influence University freshmen's academic performance. From the findings, it was concluded that academic self-concept (low academic self-concept and high academic self-concept), low social self-concept and high social self-concept and low physical self-concept and high physical self-concept has great impact on University freshmen's academic performance. Furthermore, since educational facilities play fundamental role in improving the educational outcomes of students, it is therefore, strongly recommended that university administration should provide adequate educational facilities for the students to enhance their academic performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

  On the bases of the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. University authority or administration should provide adequate infrastructures that can carter for the physical needs of the student to enhance their performance.

2. Since educational facilities play fundamental role in improving the educational outcomes of students, it is therefore, strongly recommended that university administration should provide adequate educational facilities for the students to enhance their academic performance.

3. Lecturers and students should endeavour to create a friendly teaching-learning environment to enhance students' academic performance.

IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING

The findings of this study have some educational implications and as such contributed to knowledge. The researcher believes that the state government, ministry of education or school management needs to ponder and reflect on the findings of the study. The study has identified some factors that would serve as checks and solutions to delinquent behaviours. There are also some negative implications drawn out from the findings of the study for the study. The findings of this study have far reaching implications for parents, teachers, counsellors, government and students. Since the academic performance of students can be traced to environmental concepts. It is imperative that parents should always provide their children with good training environment. Teachers in the school should always have a good behavioural

disposition that will encourage students positively in the learning process and also make teaching and learning interesting activities as this will encourage high performance among students irrespective of the environment.

Counsellors in the discharge of their professional duties in schools should always be pro-active in identifying students with various problems that may affect their behaviour and performance. Government on the other hand should help in improving the standard of education across the nation as this will give rise to students' good behaviour and high academic achievement. And the students should also have positive attitude or disposition in terms of their educational activities irrespective of their family types or structure as it will greatly propel them in acquiring knowledge and skills in the school. The counselor, using-client centered therapy and rational emotive behavioural therapy explains thus:

In client-centered therapy, the client determines the course and direction of treatment, while the therapist clarifies the client's responses to promote self-understanding. The goals of client-centered therapy are increased self-esteem and openness to experience. Client-centered therapists work to help clients lead full lives of self-understanding and reduce defensiveness, guilt, and insecurity. As well as have more positive and comfortable relationships with others.

Client-centered therapy was developed in the 1930s by the American Psychologist Carl Roger who was a humanistic psychologist who believed that how we live in the here-and-now and our current perceptions are more important than the past. He also believed close personal relationship with a supportive environment of warmth, genuineness, and understanding, are key for therapeutic change.

Another counseling technique that is more appropriate is the Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT). This was developed by Albert Ellis in 1955. It is built on the idea that how we feel is largely influenced by how we think. As is implied by the name, this form of therapy encourages the development of rational thinking to facilitate healthy emotional expression and behaviour. Often, was of thinking ingrained in our brains at an early age or resulting from painful or traumatic events continued to subconsciously influence our behaviours and perceptions into adulthood. Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy seeks to reshape these core beliefs in those experiencing a wide range of mental health conditions, thereby enabling them to live full, satisfying lives free from unnecessary psychological distress.

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