JOURNAL OF CURRENT RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENT WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY IN ILORIN METROPOLIS

By

[1]Adedayo ADESOKAN, [2]Esther Oluwatimileyin OGUNFEYITIMI and [3]Yewande Ololade OLADELE

[1,2&3]Department of Special Education, Faculty of Education, Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria

*Correspondence E-mail: adedayo.adesokan@kwasu

08167515245 and 08077034767

Abstract

School Environment has been one of the causes of low academic performance of students with Intellectual disabilities due to poor school environment, unattractive school building, unqualified teachers, inadequate instructional materials, and class size. Therefore, the study examined perceive the influence of school environment on the academic performance of students with intellectual disability. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study.

The respondents were one hundred and twenty (120) teachers teaching students with intellectual disabilities. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents for the study. One research instrument was used and the reliability score of 0.88. One research question was stated and one hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.5 significant level. Frequency count, percentage, mean, and t-test were used to analyze the data gathered. The findings of the study revealed that the perceived influence of school environment on the academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities is positive (mean=3.2), it was also revealed that there is no significant difference on the perceived influence of school environment on academic performance of students with intellectual disability in Ilorin metropolis based on gender ($p<0.05$).

It was concluded that school environment influence academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities, it was therefore, recommended that the school environments be conducive enough to ensure safety and uninterrupted learning among students with intellectual disabilities. The government should provide funds and equipment for the school with the resources needed to handle students with intellectual disabilities.

Keywords: School Environment, Academic Performance, and intellectual disability.

Introduction

Intellectual Disability (ID) is a disorder defined by the presence of incomplete or arrested mental development, principally characterized by the deterioration of concrete functions at each stage of development that contribute to the overall level of intelligence, such as cognitive, language, motor, and socialization functions; in this anomaly, adaptation to the environment is always affected. Intellectual disability is a term used when there are limits to a student's ability to learn at an expected level and function in daily life. Students with intellectual disabilities have significantly below-average general intellectual and adaptive functioning manifested during the developmental period, with significant delays in academic skills.

Intellectual disability, also referred to as intellectual developmental disability (IDD), are general learning disability. Wilmshurst (2012) and Tidy (2013) stated that intellectual disability is a generalized neurodevelopment disorder characterized by significantly impaired intellectual and adaptive functioning. It is defined by an IQ score under 70 in addition to deficits in two or more adaptive behaviors that affect everyday general living. Intellectual disability is the level of cognitive functioning that is demonstrated by a particular student. It is the circumstance in which a student's cognitive functioning is impeded to the point of causing a significant disability in receiving information from his or her environment. Students with intellectual disabilities learn slowly and have difficulty with abstract concepts. An intellectual disability is a significant limitation in a student's cognitive functioning and daily adaptive behaviors (Schalocks & Luckasson,2004). The nature of students with intellectual disability have contributed to low academic performance.

Academic performance means a student's educational outcome after a short period of learning engagement. It is also regarded as students' success in a short-term learning activity. Bossart, Doumen, Buyse, and Verschueren (2011), defined academic performance as students' success in meeting short or long-term goals in education.

Similarly, Duruji, Azuh, and Oviasosogie (2014) posited that academic performance is the degree of a student's accomplishment of his or her tasks and studies. Duruji et al further said that the most well-known indicator of measuring academic performance is grades which reflect the student's "score" for their subjects and overall tenure.

Academic performance means the extent to which a student has attained their short or long-term educational goals. Furthermore, the academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities tends to be weak due to the basic reasons determining academic performance, i.e. special student depression, teachers' contribution, parents' contribution, and school facilitation contribution.

Al-Khatib (2011) indicated that the most important factors that influence the academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities are the lack of accurate statistics that limit proper planning for the provision of educational programs and services for students with disabilities, the poor quality of the programs and services provided to them and not be subject to evaluation, and the weak control over the quality of service provided. Jaber (2012) stated that there are many factors that affect the student's achievement level and performance, some of them are related to the student himself, some are related to the school environment, motivation others are related to the family, the process of socialization, the economic and cultural level of the family and the extent of social interdependence among its members.

Psychological and emotional factors such as fear, low self-confidence, feelings of shame, withdrawal, low self-concept, or feelings of inferiority, which negatively affect the student's academic performance and may also affect them, chronic diseases and frequent absenteeism, and malnutrition that may prevent the students from performing the activities and duties required from them are causes of specific disability in a child (Jaber 2012).

Students with intellectual disabilities face some challenges. These challenges may include difficulties with attention, memory, language and communication,

processing information, executive functioning skills, and social skills. Academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities may be affected by factors including the severity of their disability, the quality of their instruction and support, their access to assistive technology and other resources, and their schools and community environments.

The school environment refers to the physical, social, and cultural context in which students learn and interact with teachers and peers. It includes the school building, classrooms, playgrounds, and other physical spaces, as well as the policies, practices, and relationships that shape the school culture.

The school environment is that particular environment where teachers and students come together for the purpose of teaching and learning. It is also an academic environment where teaching and learning are made available to learners based on the prescription of a formal curriculum. Booth and Okely (2005) defined the school environment as the physical environment (e.g. facilities and equipment), school policies (time allocated for activities), and infrastructures (libraries, laboratories, and hostels) made available for learning achievement of students. Chuma (2012), states that the school environment includes those aspects of the students' surroundings at school that influence the process of teaching and learning.

Similarly, Ileoye (2015) posited that the school environment comprises the availability of adequate and qualitative facilities to promote teaching and learning. Odeh, Oguche, and Ivagher (2015) outlined the characteristics of the school environment to include school buildings, furniture, playgrounds, sporting facilities, and other related equipment that aid the teacher's delivery of the lesson. The school environment also includes the social relationships in school. The relationships include principal-community relationships, principal-teacher relationships, teacher-teacher relationships, teacher-students, and students-student relationships.

It has been observed that the school environment has a great influence on students

learning. The researcher observes that a good school environment promotes the academic performance of students while the reverse is the case. Poor school environment has a negative influence on students' academic performance as reported by Good (2009). Some school environmental factors influencing the academic performance of students may include school facilities, school personnel, and the nature of the school environment.

A lot of factors have been identified by researchers on the influence of the school environment on academic performance among students with intellectual disabilities in Ilorin, Kwara state. In a study conducted by Odeh, Oguche, and Ivagher, (2015) on the influence of school environment on academic performance among students with intellectual disabilities; it was found that school climate, discipline, and physical facilities have a significant influence on academic performance.

Similarly, Awule (2008) found out that the learning environment should have good infrastructural development, adequately trained teachers, good leadership, and adequate instructional materials among others also contribute to the influence of the school environment on academic performance.

In a study carried out by Duruji, Azuh, and Oviasogie (2014), on the influence of school environment on the academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities, school facilities, class size, school location, and school plant planning, aesthetics, maintenance culture, sanitation, conveniences. The study established that" the state of the learning environment and quality of infrastructure. Also, Farombi (2019) observed that the school environment may have a negative influence on students' academic achievement especially if such an environment lacks a good school climate, instructional materials, discipline, and physical facilities, has poor teacher quality, type of location of school is questionable, regards to career choice.

Apart from all the influences mentioned above, Abenga (2002), opined out other influences that affect the school environment on the academic performance of students

with intellectual disabilities include poor environmental conditions that reduce the scores, poor family support, isolation, family background, peer group, social classes, despair, doubt, discouragement, inadequate study time, slothfulness, improper timetable and financial constraints. Academic performance in this context simply means the scores students have obtained in either examination or test which has led to their performance.

The moderating variable that was examined in this study is gender, gender difference and the influence of school environment on academic performance has become a matter of considerable detail among teachers, parents, and researchers in the field of education. According to the World Development Report (WDR) 2012, gender is defined as socially constructed norms and ideologies that determine the behavior and actions of boys and girls. Risman (2004) defined gender as a social structure that organizes social relations between men and women. The World Health Organization (WHO 2021) defines gender as the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women.

Atovigba (2012) found out that it has been the general belief in most parts of the country that male students tend to perform better compared to female students in mathematically related or technology-based subjects in a prevalence study by Zhang and Manon (2000) found that males had a larger variance in mathematics scores than females, in this study, females tended to outperform males among the low-achieving students. Wang (2012) found a female disadvantage in math; such a negative gender gap in math still existed for home-staying girls (not statistically significant for school boarding girls) after controlling for nutrition intake (anemia) and anxiety level.

Research on gender on academic performance (Voyer, 2014) found that girls do outperform in language, they are also found to outperform or perform at the same level regarding math and science in the classrooms compared to boys. The performance of boys is not reaching the same level as girls in the classroom and achievement in

classrooms for these boys is falling behind, girls have outperformed boys globally in language classes. Trakulpphadetkrai (2017) also found a study in the UK where girls outperform boys in math classes, which is not culturally expected.

Hadjar et al. (2014) stated that the “traditional image of male identity, which includes dominant, 'go-getter' or even deviant roles” contributes to classroom behavior that leads to under performance. As mentioned previously, there are characteristics that are considered feminine, such as conformity and submission, that are necessary in the classroom. Hadjar finds that in an attempt to collect approval from their peers for being manly, the boys reject the “feminine” characteristics. This condition again leads to under performance. The boys in these classrooms refuse to conform to classroom expectations because they need validation from peers, however, the underperformance enhances this struggle as boys often respond to failure with aggression. Kenney-Benson's (2010) study finds that boys focus on performance and success rather than the actual learning process which would allow them to fully comprehend the topic. This is known as a negative learning strategy.

According to Wentzel (2003), the most widely reported findings in the area suggest that girls tend to do better than boys in English and that boys tend to excel in math. The literature also indicates that there are age-related differences in these male and female performance patterns. For example in a longitudinal study of student performance on the low Tests of Basic Skills, Lewis and Hoover (2010) found that in the 4th, 6th, 8th, and 11th grades, females scored significantly higher than males in English. Dingwall (2000) suggested that men and women tend to function differently in their brains. He concluded that language function may be more organized in women.

Agarwal (2004) disclosed that females showed a higher reading ability and academic achievement than males. Begum and Phukan (2001) conducted a study to analyze the relationship between academic achievement and intelligence in boys and

girls. Findings showed that there is a correlation between academic achievement and intelligence of the students and the correlation was greater in the case of girls than boys.

According to findings, it has been concluded that male students have lower academic performance than female students. On this note, the study examines the Influence of the school environment on the academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities.

Statement of the Problem

Students with intellectual disability is an individual who has significantly below-average intellectual functioning, typically measured by an IQ score below 70. Academic performance means the extent to which a student has attained their short or long-term educational goals. Students with intellectual disability face many challenges in the school environment that can impact their academic performance such as limited access to appropriate instructional materials and resources, lack of specialized support and accommodations to meet their unique learning needs, social isolation and stigma from peers and teachers, low expectations and negative attitudes from teachers and staff, limited opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities and other aspects of school life. Student with intellectual disabilities may also face challenges with communication, social skills, and adaptive behavior, which can impact their ability to navigate the school environment and interact with others. This can lead to social isolation, low self-esteem, and a lack of confidence in their abilities, which can further impact their academic performance.

Other researchers have been able to look into the influence of the school environment on the academic performance of students, but have not been able to look into the influence of the school environment on the academic performance of students with intellectual disability which the present researcher wants to look into.

Research Question

1. what is the perceived influence of school environment on the academic performance of students with intellectual disability?

Hypothesis

H1: There is no significant difference on the perceived influence of the school environment on academic performance in the Ilorin metropolis based on gender.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study; the reason for this is to provide a detailed explanation and description of the object of the research systematically. The respondents for this study were one hundred and twenty(120) teachers of students with intellectual disabilities in the Ilorin metropolis. They were purposefully selected from all special schools in the Ilorin metropolis. The perceived influence of school environment on the academic performance of students with intellectual disability questionnaire was the instrument used for the study. The perceived influence of school environment on the academic performance of students with intellectual disability questionnaire was constructed by the researcher, and it contains 10 items with a response choice of 4-point likert scale: Strongly Disagree (SD), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Agree (SA). The reliability coefficient is 0.88 was obtained using the test-retest method, which indicated that the instrument was reliable. The researcher administered the questionnaires and collected them back on the spot. The data collected were analyzed using frequency count, percentage and mean for research question while t-test was used for testing hypothesis.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the perceived influence of the school environment on the academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities in Kwara State?

SN	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	DECISION
1	Unattractive school buildings and overcrowded classrooms contribute to poor academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities	108(90.0)	10(8.3)	1(0.8)	1(0.8)	3.9	Agreed
2	Poor and inadequate physical facilities and obsolete teaching techniques lead to poor academic performance of students	25(20.8)	92(76.7)	2(1.7)	1(0.8)	3.2	Agreed
3	Adequate instructional materials aid fast learning and academic performance of students with intellectual disability	42(35.0)	76(63.3)	2(1.7)	-	3.3	Agreed
4	School resource room aids academic performance of students with intellectual disability	17(14.2)	96(80.0)	6(5.0)	1(0.8)	3.0	Agreed
5	Adequate facilities in school influence the academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities	57(47.5)	63(52.5)	-	-	3.5	Agreed
6	A well-facilitated and illuminated classroom enhances the academic performance of students with intellectual disability	23(19.2)	96(80.0)	1(0.8)	-	3.2	Agreed
7	Instructional strategies do influence the academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities	24(20.6)	16(13.3)	75(62.5)	5(4.2)	2.5	Agreed
8	Peer groups influence the academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities	22(18.3)	29(24.2)	62(51.7)	7(5.8)	2.6	Agreed
9	Spacious classroom settings influence the academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities	40(33.3)	79(65.8)	1(0.8)	-	3.3	Agreed
10	Teachers' attitudes toward students influence the academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities	38(31.7)	80(66.7)	2(1.7)	-	3.3	Agreed
	Weighted mean 3.2						

Note: The figures in parentheses are in percentages

Table 1 shows the perceived influence of the school environment on the academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities in Kwara State. The following shows perceived influence of school environment on the academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities in Kwara State as follows: Unattractive school building and overcrowded classrooms contribute to poor academic performance of students with intellectual disability (3.9), they agreed that poor and inadequate physical facilities, obsolete teaching technique lead to poor academic performance of students (3.2), they agreed that adequate instructional materials aids fast learning and academic performance of students with intellectual disability (3.3), school resource room aids academic performance of students with intellectual disability (3.0), adequate facilities in school influence academic performance of students with intellectual disability (3.5), they agreed that A well facilitated and illuminated classroom enhance academic performance of students with intellectual disability (3.2), Instructional strategies do influence academic performance of students with intellectual disability (2.5), Peer group influence academic performance of students with intellectual disability (2.6), they agreed that spacious classroom setting influence academic performance of students with intellectual disability (3.3) and they agreed that teachers' attitude towards students influence academic performance of students with intellectual disability (3.3). The weighted mean was 3.2, which means that the calculated mean was greater than the fixed mean (2.5). This implies that teachers' perception on the influence of the school environment on the academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities is positive

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the perceived influence of the school environment on the academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities and gender.

Table 2: Summary of t-test result showing the perceived influence of school environment on the academic performance of students with intellectual disability gender.

	Gender	N	Mean	Std Deviation	T	F	Df	Sig	Decision
Perceived Influence	Male	57	31.46	3.04	0.25	1.37	118	0.25	Not Sig
	Female	63	32.00	2.78					

Table 2 shows the summary of the t-test result showing the perceived the influence of school environment on the academic performance of students with intellectual disability gender. It was revealed that males had a mean score of 31.46 and a standard deviation of 3.04 while the females had a mean score of 32.00 and a standard deviation of 2.78, the t was 0.25, the degree of freedom 118, F was 1.37 and significant level of 0.25 (P>0.05). This implies that there was no significant difference between perceived the influence of the school environment on the academic performance of students with intellectual disability gender. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there was no significant difference between the perceived influence of the school environment on the academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities and gender was not rejected.

Discussion of findings

The first finding of the study revealed that the perception of teachers on the influence of school environment on the academic performance of students with an intellectual disability is positive, the reason for the study implies that respondents agreed that school environment influences the academic performance of students with intellectual disability in Ilorin metropolis. This study is in line with Ibrahim and Norsuhaily (2015) who reported that students from a school with adequate facilities, good teachers, and favorable environment perform better than those from schools with fewer facilities and less enabling environment.

The second finding revealed that there was no significant difference between the perceived influence of the school environment on the academic performance of students with disabilities based on gender. This could be because both male and female students with intellectual disabilities are been influenced by the school environment equally. This study is in-line with 1Isemede (2021) who reported that there is no significant influence of teachers' gender on the academic performance of students.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the school environment influences the academic performance of students with intellectual disabilities due to a conducive school environment, unattractive school buildings, inadequate physical learning equipment, and negative attitudes from teachers. Therefore, it was recommended that the school environment should be conducive enough to ensure safety and uninterrupted learning among students with intellectual disabilities.

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