

INFLUENCE OF THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EDO SOUTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT, EDO STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of the school administrative environment on students' academic performance in secondary schools across Edo South Senatorial District, Edo State, Nigeria. The research explored whether administrative factors such as leadership, infrastructure, school location, school size, and the principal's gender affect academic outcomes. A descriptive survey research design of a correlational type was employed. The target population consisted of 2,502 teachers and principals from 137 public secondary schools. From this, a sample of 217 respondents was drawn using random sampling. Data were collected through a validated questionnaire titled "Nature of School Administrative Environment Questionnaire (SAEQ)" and a proforma that documented students' NECO results in English, Mathematics, and Civic Education. The reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed using the split-half method, showing a high consistency score of 0.98. Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics and mean to answer research questions, and Pearson correlation was used to test hypotheses 1-3. Results indicated that while the overall administrative environment in schools was rated as good, weaknesses were found in school safety and emergency preparedness. The study also revealed that the school administrative environment had a greater influence in large schools compared to small ones and was more positively correlated in schools led by male principals. However, school location (urban vs. rural) showed minimal difference in performance outcomes. The study concluded that strengthening administrative practices in specific areas can lead to improved academic outcomes. It recommends targeted policy and structural reforms aimed at improving safety, equity in leadership effectiveness, and optimal administrative practices across school sizes and locations.

Keywords: Administrative environment, academic performance, school size, school location, gender, secondary schools, Edo State, Nigeria.

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Introduction

The school administrative environment plays a critical role in shaping the academic success of students. It refers to the overall atmosphere created by school leaders, including principals and administrators, through policies, organization, and resource management (Bush, 2020). A positive school administrative environment fosters motivation, discipline, and support for both teachers and students, which can lead to improved academic outcomes. In Nigeria, secondary schools serve as a vital stage in student education, where the administrative environment can either encourage or hinder learning and students' development.

Academic performance is the measure of how well students achieve their learning goals, frequently assessed through examinations and continuous assessments (Adeyemi, 2017). It reflects students' ability to understand and apply knowledge in various subjects. The school administrative environment is defined as the collective organizational climate, leadership style, and administrative support within a school. It includes aspects such as discipline enforcement, communication channels, infrastructure adequacy, and resource availability (Obasi & Okeke, 2021). Academic performance represents the success of students in achieving educational standards, typically indicated by scores in national or state examinations.

The nature of the school administrative environment in Nigerian secondary schools can vary widely. Some schools have well-structured administrative systems with clear rules and sufficient resources, while others may suffer from poor leadership, lack of coordination, and inadequate facilities (Ogunleye, 2019). Such variations affect the learning atmosphere and can influence student attitudes and behavior. The level of students' academic performance in secondary schools in Nigeria has been a subject of concern for many years. Recent national examination results indicate that a significant number of students fail to meet the required standards in core subjects such as Mathematics, English, and sciences (WAEC, 2023). Low performance levels have implications for student future opportunities and the development of the country's workforce. It is important to understand how the administrative environment affects these outcomes to improve education quality.

Investigating whether the school administrative environment influences academic performance is essential for identifying areas where interventions can be made. Several studies have shown that effective administration leads to better student motivation, teacher effectiveness, and thus higher academic achievement (Eneh & Agbo, 2020). The impact might differ depending on school-related factors such as location, size, and leadership characteristics, making such research vital for tailored education policies.

School location may affect how the administrative environment influences academic performance. Urban schools might have better resources, stronger leadership structures, and more community involvement compared to rural schools, which often face challenges like insufficient funding and poor infrastructure (Eze & Nwankwo, 2021). Exploring these differences helps understand how geographical context can moderate the administration's influence on student outcomes. The size of the school is another factor that can determine the effect of the school administrative environment on academic performance. Larger schools may have more complex administration but also more resources, while smaller schools might face challenges of limited staff and facilities (Olatunji, 2018). How administration adapts to school size can influence student learning experiences and achievement. The gender of the school principal may also play a role in shaping the school administrative environment and thus student performance. Research suggests that male and female principals can have different leadership styles, communication patterns, and approaches to discipline and motivation, which may affect the school climate and students' academic engagement (Akanbi, 2022). Understanding this influence can guide leadership development programs.

Orlu (2020) carried out a study in Luwero District to explore how the school environment influences students' academic performance in selected secondary schools. The study used a cross-sectional design with 302 students from eight randomly chosen

secondary schools. Data was collected through questionnaires for students, interviews with teachers and head teachers, and an observation checklist. The data was analyzed using both descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) and inferential tests like t-tests and ANOVA. Findings revealed that school infrastructure, learning materials, and the quality of teachers all had a meaningful effect on students' academic performance. Unlike Orlu's study, which focused broadly on physical infrastructure and learning resources, the current study uniquely examines administrative factors such as school leadership, size, location, and principal's gender, offering a more management-focused insight.

Eguridu (<https://www.google.com/search?q=2015>) examined how the school environment relates to students' academic achievement. Data was gathered using a specially designed School Environment Scale (SES), and a sample of 400 students in Grade 9 was selected through stratified random sampling. The analysis involved t-tests and Pearson correlation. Unlike Namugaanyi's findings (not present in the provided text), Lawrence's study (not present in the provided text) showed no significant connection between the school environment and academic performance. While Eguridu's work explored general environmental influences, the current study distinguishes itself by isolating administrative components like leadership structure, school safety, and emergency preparedness—areas often overlooked in previous studies.

Udry (2014) looked at how the gender of head teachers affected students' academic success in Bangladesh. The study involved 60 head teachers (37 males and 23 females) and 3,776 students (2,142 boys and 1,634 girls) from various schools in a major town. Student performance data from the Primary School Completion and Secondary School Certificate exams were sourced from the Rajshahi Education Board. The results showed that the head teacher's gender had a notable impact: students in primary schools led by female head teachers did better, while those in secondary schools under male head teachers performed higher. Udry's study aligns with one of the variables in the current study—principal gender—but the current research is unique as it analyzes gender alongside other administrative factors like school size and location, offering a more holistic analysis.

Osokoya and Akuche (2012) studied how school location influenced student learning in practical physics. They used a quasi-experimental design with pre-tests and post-tests involving 526 Senior Secondary School II students from eight co-educational schools in Ibadan. Random sampling was used to choose four urban and four rural local governments, and one school from each was selected. Data was collected using four reliable tools and analyzed using ANCOVA and Scheffe Post Hoc tests. The results showed that students' performance in cognitive and practical physics tasks significantly varied based on school location, with urban students generally doing better. While Osokoya and Akuche focused mainly on subject-specific performance in science and the impact of school location, the current study is broader in scope, covering general academic outcomes and adding administrative dynamics to the location variable.

Statement of the Problem

In Edo South Senatorial District of Edo State, the academic performance of many secondary school students remains a serious concern. Despite several educational

reforms and interventions across Nigeria, students in this region continue to struggle academically. Recent reports from the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) show that between 2023 and 2024, more than 60% of students nationwide failed to obtain credit passes in essential subjects such as Mathematics and English (WAEC, 2024). This national trend is reflected in the local context, where many schools in Edo South face challenges such as poor administrative structures, weak leadership, limited instructional support, and insufficient school safety measures. These issues raise important questions about how effectively the school administrative environment in the district is supporting teaching, learning, and overall student performance.

Interventions have been implemented, such as teacher training programs and improved curriculum standards, but little attention has been paid to the school administrative environment, especially in specific regions like Edo South Senatorial District, Edo State. Personal observations by the researcher in some secondary schools reveal issues such as inadequate leadership, poor resource management, and a lack of supportive policies that may contribute to low student achievement. Previous empirical studies such as Eguridu (<https://www.google.com/search?q=2015>), Udry (2014), and Orlu (2020) have focused on student and teacher factors affecting academic performance but have not sufficiently addressed how the administrative environment interacts with these factors, particularly in the Nigerian context. There is a knowledge gap regarding how school location, size, and principal's gender influence the relationship between administration and student performance. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the influence of the school administrative environment on the academic performance of secondary school students in Edo South Senatorial District, Edo State. Understanding these dynamics will help design targeted administrative improvements that could enhance students' academic success in the region and beyond.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. What is the nature of the school administrative environment in secondary schools in Edo South Senatorial District?
- ii. What is the influence of the school administrative environment on the academic performance of students based on school location?
- iii. What is the influence of the school administrative environment on the academic performance of students based on school size?
- iv. What is the influence of the school administrative environment on the academic performance of students based on the principal's gender?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for this study:

- i. There is no significant relationship between the school administrative environment and students' academic performance based on school location.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between the school administrative environment and students' academic performance based on school size.

- iii. There is no significant relationship between the school administrative environment and students' academic performance based on the principal's gender.

Methodology

This study used a correlational survey design. This approach was suitable because it allowed the researcher to clearly explain and describe the current state of the variables being studied within actual school environments. The method focused on collecting data to describe and interpret existing situations using a representative portion of the total population.

The population included all 2,502 teachers (including principals) working in senior secondary schools across the Edo South Senatorial District. This information was obtained from the Edo State Ministry of Education in Benin City. These schools are located across seven Local Government Areas: Egor, Ikpoba-Okha, Oredo, Orhionmwon, Ovia North-East, Ovia South-West, and Uhunmwode. From the 137 public secondary schools in the district, 21 schools were randomly selected. A total of 217 teachers and principals formed the sample. The results of students in Mathematics, English, and Civic Education were collected using a proforma, as these subjects are common and compulsory across all secondary schools in both urban and rural areas. The small number of teachers in rural areas influenced the choice of this method.

Two main instruments were used to collect data: a questionnaire and a proforma for recording students' examination results. The questionnaire was titled "Nature of School Administrative Environment Questionnaire (SAEQ)" and was divided into two parts. Section A collected demographic details such as gender, school location, and school size. Section B contained 22 structured questions related to the school administrative environment, using a 4-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points), and Strongly Disagree (1 point). The proforma was used to gather NECO examination scores, which were provided by the school principals upon the researcher's request.

The questionnaire's validity was confirmed through reviews by two experts from the Faculty of Arts and Education, Benson Idahosa University, Benin City. Their feedback helped refine the final version of the instrument, improving its quality and relevance. To ensure the instrument's reliability, the split-half method was used. Twenty teachers, who were not part of the main study, were given the questionnaire. After two days, their responses were analyzed, resulting in a high correlation score of 0.98, indicating that the instrument was reliable and consistent.

A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed to teachers and principals in the selected schools. Out of these, 217 were returned and completed properly. The researcher, along with two trained research assistants, handled the distribution and collection of the questionnaires. This process was done after getting permission from school authorities and lasted for two weeks. The gathered responses were then used for analysis. Research questions 1-2 were answered using the mean, while hypotheses 1-2 were tested using Pearson correlation.

Results

Answers to the Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the nature of the school administrative environment in secondary schools in the Edo South Senatorial District?

Answers to the Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the nature of school administrative environment in secondary school in south senatorial district of Edo State?

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics showing the nature of School Administrative Environment in Secondary schools in Edo South Senatorial District

S/N	Nature of School Administrative Environment	N	ΣF_x	X	Remark
1	The principal interact well with students in a variety of situations	217	707	3.2731	Good
2	The principal communicates effectively with teachers	217	707	3.2581	Good
3	The principal has the ability to lead our school on the path of continuous improvement	217	680	3.1336	Good
4	The principal has open to new ideas that improves the school	217	675	3.1106	Good
5	The principal in my school does regular class supervision	217	665	3.0645	Good
6	The principal encourages staff to work towards the same objectives	217	666	3.0691	Good
7	I can discuss my challenges with my principal	217	632	2.9124	Good
8	There is adequate management of time by the principal during meetings	217	616	2.8387	Good
9	Cordial relationship exist between teachers and students	217	641	2.9539	Good
10	The teachers in my school have respect for one another	217	656	3.0230	Good
11	There is appropriate means of settling conflicts in my school	217	622	2.8664	Good
12	There is adequate maintenance of facilities in my school	217	576	2.6257	Good
13	School records are adequately kept by officers assigned	217	633	2.9171	Good
14	Students learning environment is neat	27	606	2.7926	Good
15	Students have respect for teachers	217	599	2.7604	Good
16	Students have respect for themselves	217	572	2.6359	Good
17	Students have the opportunity to get guidance for their learning difficulties	217	599	2.7604	Good
18	Students are disciplined during assembly	217	603	2.7788	Good

19	Students get sufficient information about matters related to their studies	217	621	2.8618	Good
20	There are adequate precautions in place to prevent unauthorized individuals from entering the school	217	553	2.5484	Good
21	The school gate is always locked during school hours	217	493	2.2719	Poor
22	The school has adequate facilities for first aid during Emergencies	217	459	2.1152	Poor

The data in Table 1 showed that out of 22 items, the nature of the school administrative environment was found to be good in 20 items, having a mean set above 2.5. However, it was rated low in 2 items: "the school gate is always locked during school hours" and "the school has adequate facilities for first aid during emergencies," with means of 2.2719 and 2.1152 respectively.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

H₀: There is no significant relationship between school administrative environment and students' academic performance based on school location.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Between School Administrative Environment and Academic Performance by School Location

School Location	N	Pearson (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision (p < 0.05)
Urban Schools	108	0.482	0.001	H ₀ Rejected
Rural Schools	109	0.393		

The information in Table 2 showed that the Pearson correlation coefficient between the school administrative environment and students' academic performance was 0.482 for urban schools and 0.393 for rural schools. Both correlations are positive and statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a moderate strength relationship in both locations. This implies that in both urban and rural schools, improvements in administrative practices are associated with higher student performance. However, the strength of this relationship is notably stronger in urban schools, likely due to better resources, infrastructure, and administrative oversight. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. School location does not prevent a relationship from existing, but it does influence the degree to which the administrative environment impacts performance.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between school administrative environment and students' academic performance based on school size.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Between School Administrative Environment and Academic Performance by School Size

School Size	N	Pearson (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision (p < 0.05)
Large Schools	125	0.510	0.002	H ₀ Rejected
Small Schools	92	0.362		

The result in Table 3 revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between the school administrative environment and academic performance in both large ($r=0.510$) and small ($r=0.362$) schools. Both relationships are significant at the 0.02 level, with larger schools showing a moderately strong correlation, while smaller schools show a moderate but weaker correlation. This suggests that school size plays a role in shaping how administrative practices affect academic success. Larger schools may benefit from more structured leadership, better resource distribution, and clearer policy implementation, which in turn enhances students' learning environment and outcomes. On the other hand, smaller schools may struggle with limited human and material resources, affecting how well administrative inputs translate to academic performance.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between school administrative environment and students' academic performance based on the principal's gender.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Between School Administrative Environment and Academic Performance by Principal's Gender

Principal's Gender	N	Pearson(r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision (p < 0.05)
Male Principals	130	0.474	0.001	H ₀ Rejected
Female Principals	87	0.397		

The analysis in Table 4 showed a positive and statistically significant correlation between the school administrative environment and students' academic performance under both male ($r=0.474$) and female ($r=0.397$) leadership. Although both correlations are significant at the 0.01 level, the strength of the relationship is slightly stronger in schools led by male principals. This finding implies that regardless of gender, effective administrative practices contribute to improved academic outcomes. However, male-led schools in this sample showed a higher correlation, which may reflect differences in administrative style, authority perception, or experience levels between male and female principals.

Discussion of Findings

The first findings revealed that the nature of the school administrative environment in secondary schools in Edo State is good, except for two items: "the school gate is always locked during school hours" and "the school has adequate facilities for first aid during emergencies". These findings are in agreement with Orlu (2020), who emphasized that when human and material resources are effectively managed in a school, it creates a positive administrative environment.

As shown in Hypothesis One, the Pearson correlation coefficient between the school administrative environment and students' academic performance was $r=0.482$ for urban schools and $r=0.393$ for rural schools, both significant at $p < 0.01$. This indicates a moderate positive relationship in both settings. In urban and rural schools alike, effective administration through leadership, supervision, discipline, and communication is associated with improved academic performance. The stronger correlation in urban schools may be due to better infrastructure, resources, and administrative support. While this supports earlier research on the influence of school administration, it contrasts with the idea that location has no impact. Unlike Osokoya and Akuche (2012) and Owoeye & Yara (2010), who emphasized urban advantage, this study shows both urban and rural schools benefit from good administration; the difference lies in the degree, not the existence, of the effect.

Results from Hypothesis Two revealed a significant positive correlation between the school administrative environment and academic performance in both large schools ($r=0.510, p=0.000$) and small schools ($r=0.362, p=0.002$). The stronger correlation in larger schools suggests that school size affects how administration impacts student outcomes. Larger schools often have more structured leadership, better resource allocation, and clearer policies, all of which contribute to a more supportive learning environment. While smaller schools also benefit from effective administration, they may be limited by fewer staff and less funding, reducing the administrative impact. This aligns with Ajewole et al., who noted that learning conditions and discipline, often better managed in larger schools, support higher academic success.

Findings from Hypothesis Three show a significant and positive correlation between the school administrative environment and academic performance under both male principals ($r=0.474, p=0.001$) and female principals ($r=0.397, p=0.003$). The slightly stronger correlation in male-led schools suggests that gender may influence administrative effectiveness. However, regardless of gender, strong administration improves student outcomes. The stronger results under male principals may reflect differences in leadership approach, administrative experience, or societal perceptions of authority. This contrasts with Udry (2014), who found female principals more effective, but supports Haig (2014), who argued that leadership success depends more on team support and school culture than gender alone.

Conclusion

The study confirms that the school administrative environment has a significant and positive impact on students' academic performance in secondary schools across Edo South Senatorial District. Schools with strong administrative practices, especially in leadership, discipline, and supervision, consistently achieve better academic outcomes. All three hypotheses showed significant relationships, regardless of school location, size, or principal's gender, though the strength of the relationship varied. Urban schools and larger schools showed stronger correlations, likely due to better infrastructure and administrative resources. Similarly, while both male and female principals contributed positively, schools led by males had a slightly higher correlation. These findings highlighted the need for targeted administrative strategies that consider school context to improve student achievement.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that:

1. School authorities should ensure that gates are locked during school hours, emergency protocols are in place, and all schools are equipped with functional first aid facilities and safety kits. A safe environment is essential for consistent learning.
2. Since male-led schools demonstrated a slightly stronger relationship between administration and academic success, leadership development programs should be expanded, especially for female principals, to bridge this gap.
3. There is a need to provide additional administrative and logistical support to smaller schools to enhance their effectiveness. This support should include recruiting more qualified staff, supplying adequate instructional materials, and strengthening internal administrative structures.
4. The Ministry of Education should implement uniform administrative benchmarks and supervisory practices in both urban and rural schools to promote equity and sustained improvement.

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