DIMENSIONS OF INSECURITY AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN UPPER BASIC EDUCATION SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated the dimensions of insecurity and students' academic performance in upper basic education schools in Rivers State. Four research questions were answered in the study and four hypotheses tested. Correlation design was adopted in the study while the population of the study consisted of all the students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State out of which 300 students were sampled using stratified random sampling technique. Instrument used for data collection were a 20 item questionnaire titled "Dimensions of Insecurity Questionnaire" (DIQ) and a 10 item questionnaire titled "Students Academic Performance Questionnaire" SAPQ). The instruments were validated by two Measurement and Evaluation lecturers at the University of Port Harcourt. Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaires with coefficients of 0.84 and 0.88 for the DIQ and SAPQ. Out of the 300 copies of questionnaire administered, 297 copies, representing 99.0% were retrieved. Research questions raised were answered using simple regression while the hypotheses were tested using t-test associated with simple regression at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study indicated that social, emotional, food and environmental insecurities had moderate, low, moderate and high negative effects on students' academic performance and these insecurities accounted for 43.3%, 16.2%, 48.0% and 96.0% of the academic performance of these students respectively. It was concluded that these insecurities were significant to the academic performance of these students and as such regular supervision of schools by the government was recommended for the purpose of compliance with minimum security standards for improved academic performance among the students.
Keywords: Insecurity, Students' Academic Performance, Upper Basic Education, Rivers State

Introduction

A safe and secured environment is essential not only for the administration of the school system but also for making meaningful teaching and learning take place in the school environment. The government as well as school administrators invest heavily in the school and on the various school personnel for the purpose of ensuring that educational goals and objectives are actualized. Most importantly, attention is always given to the learner who is the primary reason why the school exists so that he or she can acquire the needed skill, knowledge and attitude to become a reasonable and responsible member of the society. An insecure school affects the quality of education in any system (Jacob *et al.,* 2021) and this will invariably affect the performance of the learner.

However, in the face of rising security challenges within and outside the school environment, there are several security threats that can jeopardize the goals and objectives of teaching and learning if left unresolved. The issue of insecurity which refers to any form of threat on people and resources can hinder a school from meeting its goals and objectives both generally and specifically. According to Achumba *et al.,* (2013), insecurity is always characterized by danger, hazard, uncertainty, lack of confidence, doubt etc. and all of these can negatively impact on the quality of education that can be provided by the teacher for the student thereby affecting the learners' academic performance.

There are several dimensions of insecurity that can affect the learner which if not addressed can mitigate possible learning outcomes. Students may experience health, food, social, financial, environmental and emotional insecurities (Out, 2019) which can affect the academic performance of the learner.

The various insecurities that the child experiences in the school can affect the child by limiting his or her attention in class or even affect overall participation in learning thereby resulting in either short or long term effects on learning. It therefore becomes important to understudy all of these dimensions of insecurities especially the ones that pertain to the learner and see how each of these dimensions affects the academic performance of the learner so that appropriate interventions can be provided where necessary.

Dimensions of Insecurity and Students' Academic Performance

The academic performance of the learner is the numerical outcome or the extent to which a learner has been able to achieve expected results either in a continuous assessment, examination or any other unit of assessment. The academic performance of the learner is often determined by how well the student has been able to fare in terms of achievement across different subject areas and this outcome is often affected by different indicators. The different dimensions of insecurity that the child is exposed to can affect the ability of the learner to

perform as expected in any form of assessment thereby affecting the child's overall academic performance.

Social insecurity as well as emotional insecurity are part of the insecurities that the learner faces. While social insecurity focuses on the inability of the learner to show confidence and interact with other school members especially in social activities, emotional insecurity is a sense of unease or nervousness which makes it difficult to concentrate. It has been pointed out by researchers such as Akbari and Sahibzada (2020), that exhibiting self-confidence has a high level of influence on students learning and as such dealing with such insecurities is essential for meaningful learning to take place in the school.

The issue of food insecurity especially for learners at the lower level of education is also a crisis situation that can affect attention in school and also affect enrollment, attendance and overall academic performance of the child. Food insecurity is a situation where the food available to an individual does not meet the right quality or quantity and this necessitated the introduction of the school feeding programme in Nigeria to mitigate the cases of out-of-school phenomenon as well as improve on the performance of the learner. It was pointed out by Wunderlich and Norwood in Latib *et al.,* (2021:130) that "food insecurity is the inadequacy or shortage in the quality and quantity of food resources available to an individual for consumption". Food insecurity can affect the educational willingness and participation of a child like every other security challenge. On the other hand, Ojukwu and Chigozirim (2015) pointed out that environment insecurity exists in different forms such as poor weather condition, wrong attitude of the teacher and lack of professionalism in all the activities that take place within the school. Similarly, Akintunde and Selzing-Musa (2016) noted that environmental insecurity takes different forms such as cultism and kidnapping and it can also include any form of the threat from interacting with human and material resources in the school which can pose danger or expose the child to harm and limit interest in learning.

Empirical Reviews

Several studies have been conducted by researchers to ascertain how different dimensions of insecurity affect the academic performance of students. One of such study was conducted by Weaver *et al.,* (2019) on university student food insecurity and academic performance and it was shown that while 48% of the students were food insecure, it was also indicated that food insecurity increased the odds of being among the lower 10% GPA and reduced the odds of being among the upper 10% GPA. On the other hand, Latib *et al.,* (2021) examined the relationship between food insecurity and students' academic performance in public universities and found that students at a lower risk of food

insecurity included those who reported living with their parents and those who received monthly allowances from government agencies and their parents.

Similarly, Agbongiasede & Ololube (2021) investigated managing insecurity for students' academic performance in junior secondary schools in Emohua LGA in Rivers State. The result of the study showed that insecurity affected students' academic performance negatively. In a related manner, Akbari and Sahibzada (2020) also investigated students' self-confidence and its impacts on their learning process and found that students' self-confidence affected learning in areas of students' participation, in seeking goal, developing interest in lessons, in decreasing students' anxiety among other learning outcomes. Zareen (2020) also investigated the effect of insecure environment on the academic performance of female students in Pakistan and found that an insecure city environment has a significant negative effect on academic performance among female college students who were attending Government colleges in Pakistan. These various studies established the fact that the various dimensions of insecurities that the learners experience in and outside the school can affect their learning outcome and academic performance and needs to be given the attention it deserves for improved students' academic performance.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate the dimensions of insecurity and students' academic performance in upper basic education schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

1. determine the extent to which social insecurity affects the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State.
2. ascertain the extent to which emotional insecurity affects the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State.
3. examine the extent to which food insecurity affects the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State.
4. find out the extent to which environmental insecurity affects the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study:

1. To what extent does social insecurity affect the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State?
2. To what extent does emotional insecurity affect the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State?
3. To what extent does food insecurity affect the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State?

4. To what extent does environmental insecurity affect the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Social insecurity does not significantly affect the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State.
2. Emotional insecurity does not significantly affect the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State.
3. Food insecurity does not significantly affect the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State.
4. Environmental insecurity does not significantly affect the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State.

Methodology

The design of the study was a correlation since the study focused on investigating the relationship between a dependent and an independent variable. The population of the study consisted of all the students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State out of which 300 students were sampled for the study using stratified random sampling technique since the students were sampled across the three Senatorial Districts as well as by gender for proportional representation. The instrument used for data gathering was a 20 item questionnaire titled "Dimensions of Insecurity Questionnaire" (DIQ) for collecting data on the independent variable of the study while the other questionnaire with ten questionnaire items titled "Students Academic Performance Questionnaire" SAPQ) was used to collect data on the dependent variable of the study. The questionnaires were responded to on a four point modified Likert scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE) Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) with weighted values of 4, 3, 2 and

1. When the value of r = 0.00 to 0.40, 0.41 to 0.80 and 0.81 to 1.00 the relationship is considered to be low, moderate and high in that order. The instruments were face and content validated by two Measurement and Evaluation lecturers at the University of Port Harcourt. Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaires with coefficients of 0.84 and 0.88 for the DIQ and SAPQ which showed that the instruments were reliable. Out of the 300 copies of questionnaire administered, 297 copies which was 99.0% were properly filled and used for analysis. The research questions raised were answered using simple regression while the hypotheses were tested using t-test associated with simple regression at 0.05 level of significance.

Results
Answer to Research Questions

Research Question One: To what extent does social insecurity affect the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: Simple regression analysis on the effect of social insecurity on the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Remark
1	-.658[a]	.433	.431	1.69490	Moderate Negative Relationship

a. Predictors: (Constant), SocialInsecurity

Table 1 revealed that social insecurity has a moderate negative effect on the academic performance of students in upper basic schools in Rivers State. It was also shown that 43.3% of the variations in the academic performance of these students was as a result of social insecurity issue.

Research Question Two: To what extent does emotional insecurity affect the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Simple regression analysis on the effect of emotional insecurity on the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Remark
1	-.403[a]	.162	.159	2.06013	Low Negative Relationship

a. Predictors: (Constant), EmotionalInsecurity

Table 2 showed that emotional insecurity has a low negative relationship with the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State. The result also implied that 16.2% of the academic performance of these students may be attributed to the emotional security challenges that the students are facing.

Research Question Three: To what extent does food insecurity affect the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State?

Table 3: Simple regression analysis on the effect of food insecurity on the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Remark
1	-.693[a]	.480	.478	1.62328	Moderate Negative Relationship

a. Predictors: (Constant), FoodInsecurity

Table 3 indicated that there existed a moderate but negative relationship between students' food insecurity and their academic performance in upper basic education schools in Rivers State. The result indicated that 48.0% of the outcome of the students in their academics can be attributed to the problem of food insecurity.

Research Question Four: To what extent does environmental insecurity affect the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State?

Table 4: Simple regression analysis on the effect of environmental insecurity on the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Remark
1	-.980[a]	.960	.960	.44957	High Negative Relationship

a. Predictors: (Constant), EnvironmentalInsecurity

Table 4 revealed that there was a high and negative relationship between students' environmental insecurity experience and their academic performance in the upper basic education schools in Rivers State. This result meant that 96.0% of the variations in the academic performance of these students can be attributed to the challenges of environmental insecurity in these schools.

Test of Hypotheses
Hypothesis One: Social insecurity does not significantly affect the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State

Table 5: t-test associated with simple regression on the significant effect of social insecurity on the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Decision
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	11.751	.324		36.244	.000	
SocialInsecurity	.611	.041	.658	15.008	.000	Significant

a. Dependent Variable: Students Academic Performance

Table 5 showed that at a significant value of 0.00 which was less than the p-value of 0.05 and a corresponding t-value of 15.008, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted, implying that there was a significant effect of social insecurity on the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Two: Emotional insecurity does not significantly affect the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State

Table 6: t-test associated with simple regression on the significant effect of emotional insecurity on the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Decision
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	.883	2.055		.430	.668	
EmotionalInsecurity	1.846	.244	.403	7.558	.000	Significant

a. Dependent Variable: Students Academic Performance

Table 6 revealed that at a significant value of 0.00 which was less than the p-value of 0.05 and a corresponding t-value of 7.558, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted, meaning that there was a significant effect of emotional insecurity on the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Three: Food insecurity does not significantly affect the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State.

Table 7: t-test associated with simple regression on the significant effect of food insecurity on the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Decision
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	43.000	1.616		26.610	.000	
FoodInsecurity	-3.167	.192	-.693	-16.497	.000	Significant

a. Dependent Variable: StudentsAcademicPerformance

Table 7 established that at a significant value of 0.00 which was less than the p- value of 0.05 and a corresponding t-value of -16.497, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted, implying that there was a significant effect of food insecurity on the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Four: Environmental insecurity does not significantly affect the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State.

Table 8: t-test associated with simple regression on the significant effect of environmental insecurity on the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Decision
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	-7.265	.282		-25.770	.000	
EnvironmentalInsecurity	2.752	.033	.980	84.257	.000	Significant

a. Dependent Variable: StudentsAcademicPerformance

Table 8 showed that at a significant value of 0.00 which was less than the p-value of 0.05 and a corresponding t-value of 84.257, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted, showing that there was a significant effect of environmental insecurity on the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study indicated that social insecurity has a moderate negative effect on the academic performance of students in upper basic schools in Rivers State. It was also shown that 43.3% of the variations in the academic performance of these students was as a result of social insecurity issue and that there was a significant effect of social insecurity on the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State. This finding aligns with the outcome of the study carried out by Agbongiasede and Ololube (2021) on managing insecurity for students' academic performance in junior secondary schools in Emohua LGA in Rivers State which revealed that insecurity affected students' academic performance negatively. This implies that as security issues continue to escalate, the academic performance of the learner will be inversely affected. Social insecurity is borne out of the inability of an individual to relate with other people in a social setting and this can affect the freedom to interact freely with others and acquire the needed information for making informed decisions. When the social insecurity of the learner increases, the willingness and freedom to interact with others including the teacher and fellow students become threatened and when this begins to happen, the performance of the student will be negatively affected. The drivers of this social insecurity can be from relationship at home or in school and this requires a collective approach to assist the students overcome this situation for better academic performance.

Similarly, the study showed that emotional insecurity has a low negative relationship with the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State. It was indicated that 16.2% of the academic performance of these students can be attributed to emotional security challenges that the students are facing and that there was a significant effect of emotional insecurity on the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State. The study by Akbari and Sahibzada (2020) aligns with the outcome of this study as it was indicated that students' self-confidence impacted on their learning process especially in the areas of students' participation, in seeking goal, developing interest in lessons, in decreasing students' anxiety among other learning outcomes. Emotional insecurity is borne out of nervousness and low self- esteem and this also has the capacity to affect the social life of the learner. Students who face emotional insecurity require professional assistance as this will not only affect their academic performance but can also affect the career life of the student if not properly handled. This can be done by exposing the child to career counselling which will help the learner build confidence and develop the needed assurance to make academic progress.

Furthermore, the findings of the study indicated that there existed a moderate but negative relationship between students' food insecurity and their academic performance in upper basic education schools in Rivers State. The result

of the study proved that 48.0% of the outcome of the students in their academics can be attributed to the problem of food insecurity and that there was a significant effect of food insecurity on the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State. Agreeing with the result of this study, Weaver *et al.,* (2019) also conducted a related study on university students' food insecurity and academic performance which revealed that food insecurity increased the odds of being among the lower 10% GPA and this implies that students who are food insecure are more likely to be in the group of the less performing students in the class. The shortage of food in the right quality and quantity especially in the area of nutrients can affect the students negatively. Several students especially in basic schools who come to school hungry are more likely to lose interest in teaching and learning and this can have negative effects on their academic performance. Similarly, Latib *et al.,* (2021) noted that students at a lower risk of food insecurity included those who reported living with their parents and those who received monthly allowances from government agencies and their parents. This calls for more attention from parents, guidance and the government to adequately address this issue so as to improve the chances of better academic performance for these students.

Findings from the study equally established that there was a high and negative relationship between students' environmental insecurity experience and their academic performance in the upper basic education schools in Rivers State. It was shown that 96.0% of the variations in the academic performance of these students can be attributed to the issue of environmental insecurity in these schools and that there was a significant effect of environmental insecurity on the academic performance of students in upper basic education schools in Rivers State. The result of this study agrees with that of Zareen (2020) which showed that insecure city environment has a significant negative effect on academic performance among female college students who were attending Government colleges in Pakistan. This finding points to the fact that when the school environment is insecure, students won't be able to perform well academically. The school environment which includes the people and the infrastructure in the school all have effects on the entire teaching and learning activities that take place in the school. However, when these environmental factors pose a threat to the learner, it will be difficult for learning to take place and this may explain why this dimension of insecurity had the highest effect on the academic performance of the learner in an inverse direction. This means that the school and learning environment must be in an ideal situation for students to be able to learn without fear or threat and also improve in their academics and this goes on to also affect the life ambition of the student.

Conclusion

The study concludes based on the findings that the various dimensions of insecurity (social, emotional, food and environment) were all significant determinants of the academic performance of students in upper basic schools in Rivers State. The environmental insecurity dimension had the highest effect on the academic performance of the student implying that the environment is a major determinant of the academic performance of these students than the social, emotional and food forms of insecurities in the sampled schools.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were proffered based on the findings of the study:

1. Functional counselling units should be established in all of the upper basic schools where students who feel threatened both socially and emotionally can seek for professional assistance so as to put the learners in the right state of mind to improve in their academics.
2. The school feeding programme need to be extended to all upper basic schools with more commitment from the government and the quality and quantity of meals provided should meet the minimum basic institutional requirements so as to motivate the students and improve on their willingness to learn as well as their academic performance.
3. Regular school inspection should be carried out by the government while the school administrators are also encouraged to institute safe school environment policies so that the school environment can be safe and secured for the learner to learn and perform well without facing any form of threat from other human and material resources in the school.

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