

# The Influence of School Learning Environment on Students' Academic Performance: A Case of Secondary Schools in Morogoro Municipality

Stella C. Moshi

P. O. Box 213, Bagamoyo, Tanzania  
stellamoshi03[at]gmail.com  
+255754963967

**Abstract:** *The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of school learning environment on students' academic performance, a case of secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. The sample size of this study was 269 respondents. This study used simple random sampling technique in selection of form four students and purposive sampling technique in selection of teachers. Primary data were collected through questionnaire and interview methods, while secondary data were collected through documentary reviews. The findings of the study revealed that, majority of respondents noted that classrooms and teaching and learning facilities influence students' academic performance with 94.7% and 91.5% respectively. Furthermore, the findings of the study show that 68.1%, 55.7%, and 48% of respondents indicated that provision of electricity and electrical facilities, accessibility to school laboratory equipments, availability of water supply influence students' academic performance respectively. The study recommends that, Government should ensure there is an effective maintenance or renovation of old buildings, chairs, desks, recreational equipment among others. Furthermore, on side of secondary schools, these actions should be a part and parcel of their daily activities.*

**Keywords:** School Learning Environment and Student Academic Performance

## 1. Introduction

Education in general plays a vital role in promoting sustainable development through improving the population's various skills as well as raising awareness on various issues of national importance including improving general standards of living (Kigongo, 2018). El-Sheikh (2015) noted that, quality education enriches learner's lives to the fullest extent, as they are the expected contributory citizens of the nation.

Glossary of Education Reform (2014) noted that, among others, learning environment is one of the principal factors contributing to attainment of quality education. In this case, it is felt from the literature that learning environment has become a major deciding factor in enhancing teaching and learning process, as the quality education and academic performances are strongly inter-related to bring the desired outcomes to the learners (El-Sheikh, 2015). In this context, UNICEF (2000) contends that learning can occur anywhere but positive learning outcomes are generally sought by the educational system established in the quality learning environment.

The study by Hussain and Suleman (2014) consider learning environment as the complete physical environment such as lighting, temperature, ventilation system, size of the room, floor, walls; and any designated places like libraries, tutoring centres, science laboratories; social services, such as healthy, availability of water and sanitation facilities and pedagogical context in which learning is intended to occur.

Moreover, learning environment refers to infrastructure and location of the schools, the appropriate administrative atmosphere of the schools and teachers' competency (Nswebe, 2017). Such infrastructure includes buildings /

classrooms, playground and sports materials, classroom with well ventilation system and lighting, proper sitting arrangement, first aid facilities, water supply and sanitation facilities, and libraries. In learning environment, elements of teaching-learning process include: teacher, students, content, learning process and learning situation (Arul Laurence, 2012).

Hence, clean, quiet and comfortable environments are important components of learning environment (Gilavand, 2016). Furthermore, creating an ideal learning environment ought to be a priority of every concerned educationalist because being comfortable should be a combination of several factors which include temperature, lighting, and noise control etc (Murugan & Rajoo, 2013).

The extent to which students' learning could be enhanced depends on the combination of location within the school compound, the structure of their classroom, availability of instructional facilities and accessories which create an uncomfortable and uninviting workplace for teachers. It is believed that a school with adequate learning environment contributes to stir up expected outcomes of learning that will facilitate good academic performance, by encouraging effective teaching and learning in Japan (Duruji, *et al.*, 2014).

The study by Tsavga (2011) in Nigeria maintains that a learning environment plays a vital role in determining how students perform or respond to circumstances and situations around them. This implies that no society is void of environmental influences. The learning environment determines to a large extent how a student behaves and interacts, that is to say that the environment tend to mould behavior so as to meet the demands of life whether negatively or positively.

Likewise, the study Haki Elimu (2013) in Tanzania on the factors that attributed to students' academic performance at various levels of education, had found that academic performances are influenced by a number of factors. Among others, the study had found the following factors, teachers' working condition such as availability of public services and housing; school ownership (i.e., central government own, community, religious own and private or individual owned schools); availability of teaching and learning facilities such as books and laboratories, and home factors such as types of school and the educational climate at home and student background factors.

The academic performance of students in public secondary schools is something which everyone expects to be of higher quality because of the roles the sector plays to provide service to the community. On the other hand, those who failed to perform better cannot contribute well to the human resources because they don't have skill needed (Maganga, 2016). Despite of that, education provided in public secondary education does not meet the desired expectations. This is evidenced by the continuous poor academic performances of form IV secondary school students in national examinations in Morogoro municipality. This is alarming and indicates that, academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Morogoro municipality is poor. The poor achievements in examinations among public secondary students in Tanzania reflect shallow and temporary knowledge.

This raised a question on whether the declines in student academic performance are attributed to school learning environment such as lack of classrooms, libraries, qualified personnel, and laboratories. Information to what extent does the school learning environment influence students' academic performance in Morogoro municipality is not well established. Thus, this study intends to fill such gap by investigating the influence of school environment on learning towards public secondary school students' academic performance in Morogoro municipality.

## 2. Research Methodology

This section presents the methodology that guided the study. This paper employed a descriptive research design. The targeted population comprised all four students and teachers from four selected community secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. The sample size of this study was 319 respondents that include 269 form four students and 50 teachers. Simple random sampling techniques and purposive random sampling techniques were used in selection of form four students and teachers respectively. Data were collected by questionnaires and interview methods. Quantitative data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics while qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis.

## 3. Research Finding and Discussion

This section focuses on presenting the findings and discussions of this study basing on the study objective. This study was set to identify the influence of school learning environment on students' academic performance. In order to study this, respondents were asked to indicate the influence

of school learning environment on students' academic performance. Findings of this objective are presented below.

### 3.1 Provision of Furniture in Classroom

Table 4.1 shows that, 161 respondents equivalent to 59.9% strongly agreed that, provision of furniture in classroom influence students' academic performance, 91 respondents equivalent to 33.8% agreed, 10 respondents equivalent to 3.7% were neutral, and the remaining 7 respondents equivalent to 2.6% disagreed. These findings indicate that, majority of respondents (94.7%) agreed that provision of furniture in classroom influence students' academic performance.

**Table 4.1:** Provision of Furniture in Classroom

Details	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	161	59.9
Agree	91	33.8
Neutral	10	3.7
Disagree	7	2.6
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data (2022)

These findings imply that, classroom furniture is the key to the success of student learning environment since they enhance classroom engagement of both students and teachers. This tends to increase the attendance rates since students are comfortable to use chairs and desks and as a result their academic performances are improved. Furthermore, schools with quality classroom furniture help in reducing pains such as neck, shoulder, upper, and lower back pain that students might face once they used poor classroom furniture and thus they focus on their studies.

### 3.2 Provision of Teaching and Learning Facilities

Table 4.2 shows that, 135 respondents equivalent to 50.2% strongly agreed that, provision of teaching and learning facilities influence students' academic performance, 111 respondents equivalent to 41.3% agreed, 11 respondents equivalent to 4.1% were neutral, 7 respondent equivalent to 2.6% disagreed, and the remaining 5 respondent equivalent to 1.9% strongly disagreed. These findings indicate that, an overwhelming majority of respondents (91.5%) had agreed that, provision of teaching and learning facilities influence students' academic performance.

**Table 4.2:** Provision of Teaching and Learning Facilities

Details	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	135	50.2
Agree	111	41.3
Neutral	11	4.1
Disagree	7	2.6
Strongly Disagree	5	1.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data (2022)

These findings imply that the schools that possess adequate teaching and learning materials such as textbooks, charts, pictures, real objects for students to see, hear and experiment with, stand a better chance of performing well in examination than poorly equipped ones. The teaching and

learning facilities aid teaching and learning because students are able to see and often feel what the teacher teaches. In this case, in order to provide quality education the availability of sufficient teaching and learning materials is very important.

These findings confirm the research findings of Avotri *et al.* (1999) and Etsey (2005) who revealed that, the shortage of teaching and learning facilities deprived students in terms of exercises, attention and feedback from teachers as to enhance their gained knowledge and improve their academic performance.

### 3.3 Electrical Facilities in the Classroom

Table 4.3 shows that, 65 respondents equivalent to 24.2% strongly agreed that, electricity and electrical facilities in classroom influence students' academic performance, 118 respondents equivalent to 43.9% agreed, 59 respondents equivalent to 21.9% were neutral, 11 respondents equivalent to 4.1% disagreed, and the remaining 16 respondents equivalent to 5.9% strongly disagreed. These findings indicate that, majority of respondents (68.1%) had agreed that, provision of electricity and electrical facilities in classroom influence students' academic performance.

**Table 4.3:** Electrical Facilities in the Classroom

Details	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	65	24.2
Agree	118	43.9
Neutral	59	21.9
Disagree	11	4.1
Strongly Disagree	16	5.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data (2022)

These findings imply that, electricity in classrooms and the installation of ICT equipment such as web-based tools and other technologies positively influence students' blended learning situation. This happens because; of ICT equipment such as audio visual and projector facilitate interaction between teacher and students by enabling feedback. They also facilitate students' involvement in educational experiences, which increases their interest in the topics covered.

These findings were supported by a teacher in focus group discussion who revealed that:-

*Having technology tools in the classroom increase greatly the students' achievement as long as there were a lot of interactive activities in the classroom.*

### 3.4 Accessibility to School Laboratory Equipment

The accessibility of school laboratory equipment such as water, store, shelves, library attendants, tables and chairs, fans and electricity has a significant effect on the student's performance. Table 4.4 shows that, 48 respondents equivalent to 17.8% strongly agreed that, accessibility to school laboratory equipment influence students' academic performance, 102 respondents equivalent to 37.9% agreed, 38 respondents equivalent to 14.1% were neutral, 49

respondents equivalent to 17.8% disagreed, and the remaining 33 respondent equivalent to 12.3% strongly disagreed. These findings indicate that, majority of respondents (55.7%) had agreed that, accessibility to school laboratory equipment influence students' academic performance.

**Table 4.4:** Accessibility to School Laboratory Equipment

Details	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	48	17.8
Agree	102	37.9
Neutral	38	14.1
Disagree	48	17.8
Strongly Disagree	33	12.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data (2022)

These findings imply that laboratory equipments give students some basic insight into scientific concepts and leave them with feeling of the reality of science which in turn improves their academic performance in examinations. Furthermore, students manipulate materials and equipped in learning of science subjects through equipment. This helps them not only to acquire science process skills and new knowledge but also scientific attitude such as honesty, open-mindedness and cooperation as moralities of science and enhance understanding and retention of difficult concepts and procedures.

### 3.5 Availability of Water Supply

The availability of water supply in schools is one of the potent factors that contribute to academic achievement in the school system. Table 4.5 shows that, 43 respondents equivalent to 16% strongly agreed that, availability of water supply influence students' academic performance, 86 respondents equivalent to 32% agreed, 54 respondents equivalent to 20.1% were neutral, 38 respondents equivalent to 14.1% disagreed, and the remaining 48 respondents equivalent to 17.8% strongly disagreed. These findings indicate that, majority of respondents (48%) had agreed that, availability of water supply influence students' academic performance.

**Table 4.5:** Availability of Water Supply

Details	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	43	16.0
Agree	86	32.0
Neutral	54	20.1
Disagree	38	14.1
Strongly Disagree	48	17.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data (2022)

These findings imply that availability of clean water has positive effect on students' academic performance and attendance rates. This indicates that availability of stable safe water supply can cause students to increase their momentum since they won't learn with thirsty. This happens since such students are not dealing with diseases from drinking dirty water such as stomach pains and diarrhea, and thus they concentrate on studies. Furthermore girls stay in school when they hit puberty because their safety and health are not at risk.

These findings are in agreement with study by Martinez (2017) who pointed that, that despite the strong and active efforts made by the Tanzania government under free education, the challenges were still increasing such that many primary and secondary schools' buildings had inadequate sanitation facilities especially for girls and students with disabilities whereby there cases boys and girls used to share the same toilets.

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of the study revealed that, as to influence students' academic performance enough effort should be made in building and improving classrooms and increase provision of teaching and learning facilities among others like provision of electricity and electrical facilities, and ensuring accessibility to school laboratory equipment and availability of water supply. This study concludes that, improvement of such learning environment variables is necessary for improvement of students' academic performance in selected secondary schools.

The study recommends that, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training should increase its annual budget towards secondary schools. This can be used providing facilities such as modern laboratories, functional libraries, and comfortable classrooms that would ensure a favorable learning environment for both teachers and students. Furthermore, the Government should ensure there is an effective maintenance or renovation of old buildings, chairs, desks, recreational equipment among others.

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