

PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND SOCIAL WORK ENVIRONMENTS AS CORRELATES OF JOB PERFORMANCE AMONG PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between the work environment and job performance of secondary school teachers in Anambra State, Nigeria. Using a correlational research design, data were collected from 267 school principals in all the public secondary schools. Data were collected using research instruments structured by the researcher. These include the Work Environment Questionnaire (WEQ) and the Questionnaire on Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (QTJP). The instruments were validated by experts. Reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha, with values indicating high internal consistency: WEQ clusters: Physical (0.839), Social (0.824), Psychological (0.813) and QTJP: 0.808. The results revealed a significant high positive relationship between the physical work environment and job performance, a significant low positive relationship was found between the psychological work environment and job performance. Additionally, a significant low positive relationship was observed between the social work environment and job performance. These findings highlighted the importance of creating conducive physical, psychological, and social work environments to improve teachers' performance and, ultimately, the quality of education in Anambra State. Recommendations include enhancing school infrastructure, providing mental health support for teachers, and fostering better social interactions among staff and administrators.

Keywords: Work environment, job performance, physical environment, psychological environment, social environment, teachers, public secondary schools.

INTRODUCTION

The success and sustainability of educational systems are heavily reliant on the performance of teachers, as they serve as pivotal agents in shaping the intellectual and moral development of students. Teachers are the backbone of educational institutions, and their ability to deliver quality instruction and foster student engagement significantly determines the outcomes of the educational process (Okaforcha, et al., 2024). In public secondary schools, where the quality of education is often under scrutiny, the job performance of teachers directly influences the achievement of institutional goals and the overall effectiveness of the school system (Okoli, et al., 2024). Job performance in this context extends beyond the traditional delivery of instructional content. As Enwezor and Obi (2022) observed, it encompassed the ability of teachers to create meaningful learning experiences, maintain a productive classroom environment, and contribute to the holistic development of students. A teacher's job performance can shape student learning outcomes, affect school culture, and even impact the perception of education within the community.

The issue of job performance among teachers in Anambra State has become a significant concern, directly impacting the quality of education in public secondary schools. Teachers' performance is often undermined by various interconnected factors, including insufficient infrastructure, inadequate remuneration, limited

professional development opportunities, organisational justice and an unsupportive work environment (Egwu, et al., 2021; Ughamadu, et al., 2024; Obi & Akudo, 2021).. These challenges may not only impede teachers' effectiveness but can also compromise students' overall educational outcomes. As Onwumbiko (2024) noted, notable factor that can affect teachers' job performance is the poor work environment

The work environment is a multidimensional construct encompassing physical, psychological, and social aspects, each exerting a distinct influence on job performance. The physical work environment includes tangible elements such as classroom facilities, infrastructure, equipment, and overall working conditions. A conducive physical environment ensures teachers have access to adequate resources, comfortable spaces, and essential tools to perform their duties effectively. Conversely, poorly equipped classrooms, overcrowded spaces, and inadequate facilities hinder teachers' ability to deliver quality education and reduce their motivation to perform optimally (Emengini, et al., 2020; Okoli, et al., 2024).

The physical work environment plays a crucial role in determining teachers' ability to perform effectively. Access to adequate facilities, teaching aids, and well-maintained classrooms contributes significantly to creating a conducive environment for both teaching and learning. Research indicates that when teachers work in poorly equipped or overcrowded schools, their morale and productivity suffer, ultimately impacting their job performance (Emengini, et al., 2020). Many public secondary schools in the state seem to lack adequate facilities, such as well-equipped classrooms, functional laboratories, and sufficient teaching resources. Emengini, et al. (2020) observed that infrastructural decay and overcrowded classrooms create significant obstacles for teachers, limiting their ability to deliver quality education. These deficiencies could lead to a demotivated workforce and hinder teachers' ability to foster effective learning experiences for students.

Equally significant is the psychological work environment, which encompasses factors such as stress, job satisfaction, and the mental well-being of teachers. This dimension of the work environment focuses on the mental and emotional conditions under which teachers operate. Key contributors to the psychological work environment include job security, workload, stress levels, and administrative support. A positive psychological environment enhances job satisfaction, reduces burnout, and fosters a sense of fulfilment, enabling teachers to perform effectively. Conversely, a negative psychological environment can result in heightened stress, frustration, and diminished job performance. Teachers experiencing psychological distress often find it challenging to maintain focus, effectively engage with students, and sustain their enthusiasm for teaching (Onwumbiko, 2024; Obi & Akudo, 2021; Nnonyelu, et al., 2024).

Teachers' job satisfaction has been shown to correlate strongly with their orientation and ability to engage effectively in their roles (Enwezor & Obi, 2022). For instance, excessive workloads, insufficient remuneration, and job insecurity can lead to stress and burnout, reducing teachers' enthusiasm and effectiveness in the classroom (Okoli, Okaforcha, et al., 2024; Nnonyelu, et al., 2024). Conversely, psychological support, clear communication from administrators, and opportunities for professional growth can enhance teachers' motivation and commitment.

The social work environment can also impact teachers' job performance. The social work environment entails the interpersonal relationships and social dynamics within the school setting. This includes relationships with colleagues, administrators, students, and the broader school community. Supportive social interactions, collaboration among teachers, and effective leadership from school principals can create an environment of trust, cooperation, and mutual respect. On the other hand, conflict, isolation, or lack of professional recognition can undermine teachers' morale and commitment, negatively impacting their job performance.

Positive social interactions and professional relationships within the school community foster collaboration, trust, and mutual respect among teachers, students, and administrators. Studies showed that supportive leadership styles, recognition of teachers' efforts, and harmonious relationships with colleagues enhance organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Egwu, et al., 2021; Ughamadu, et al., 2024). However, a lack of recognition, interpersonal conflicts, or strained relationships with school leaders can undermine teachers' morale and reduce their effectiveness.

In many schools, strained relationships between teachers and administrators, coupled with a lack of collaboration among staff, undermine the sense of community necessary for a productive workplace. Mbonu and Azuji (2021) emphasized the importance of distributed leadership styles and positive interpersonal relationships in fostering organizational commitment. However, in Anambra State, Obionu, et al. (2024) observed that likely absence of these supportive social structures may have led to a fragmented work

environment where teachers feel isolated and undervalued. Additionally, inadequate recognition for teachers' contributed to decreased motivation and job satisfaction.

Cultural and systemic factors also contributed to the issue. Traditional attitudes toward teaching as a profession, inadequate recognition for teachers (Obionu, et al., 2024), coupled with limited government support, seem to create an environment where teachers are often undervalued. To buttress this, Egwu, et al., (2021) highlighted the role of poor human resource management practices in perpetuating the challenges faced by teachers in Anambra State. Without adequate policies to address these systemic issues, teachers are left to navigate a work environment that is neither conducive to professional growth nor supportive of their efforts to enhance student outcomes.

The implications of these challenges are far-reaching. Poor job performance among teachers leads to suboptimal student learning outcomes, reduced teacher retention rates, and a general decline in the quality of education. As Okaforcha, et al. (2024) noted, teachers' performance is directly tied to the success of educational systems. Addressing the underlying issues in the work environment is, therefore, essential to improving not only teacher performance but also the overall effectiveness of public secondary schools in Anambra State.

In Anambra State, Nigeria, public secondary schools face numerous challenges related to the physical, psychological, and social work environments of teachers. Schools often grapple with inadequate funding, infrastructural decay, overcrowded classrooms, and limited access to teaching resources, all of which affect the physical work environment. Psychologically, teachers in these schools frequently encounter high workloads, insufficient remuneration, and limited professional development opportunities, contributing to stress and dissatisfaction. Socially, strained relationships between teachers and administrators, lack of collaboration among staff, and insufficient recognition for teachers' efforts further exacerbate the challenges faced by educators.

The problem of job performance among teachers in Anambra State is rooted in a combination of physical, psychological, and social work environment challenges. Despite the critical role of the work environment in shaping teachers' performance, limited research has examined how the interplay of physical, psychological, and social factors influenced job performance among teachers in Anambra State. Understanding these correlations is crucial for identifying areas of intervention and implementing policies that foster a supportive work environment. This study, therefore, sought to investigate the extent to which the physical, psychological, and social work environments correlate with job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State. By addressing this research gap, the study aims to provide actionable insights that can inform the development of targeted strategies to enhance teachers' performance and, by extension, the quality of education in the state.

Statement of the Problem

The performance of teachers is critical to the success of any educational system, as it directly impacts the quality of education and student outcomes. In public secondary schools in Anambra State, teachers tend to face numerous challenges that hinder their ability to perform optimally. Despite their significant role in fostering the intellectual and moral development of students, teachers often operate in environments that are neither conducive to teaching nor supportive of their professional well-being.

One major concern is the state of the physical work environment in many public secondary schools. Inadequate infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, lack of teaching aids, and poorly maintained school facilities are prevalent issues. These physical conditions not only limit teachers' ability to deliver quality instruction but also negatively impact their motivation and job satisfaction. Equally troubling is the psychological work environment. Teachers in Anambra State frequently report high levels of stress, job insecurity, and dissatisfaction with their working conditions. Excessive workloads, irregular payment of salaries, insufficient professional development opportunities, and a lack of psychological support contribute to burnout and diminished enthusiasm for teaching. These issues create an environment where teachers struggle to maintain focus and commitment to their duties.

The social work environment further complicates the problem. Relationships between teachers, school administrators, and colleagues are often strained, leading to a lack of collaboration and support. Many teachers feel undervalued and unrecognized for their contributions, which affects their morale and willingness to go above and beyond in their roles. The absence of a positive and inclusive social climate within schools undermines the sense of community and shared purpose that is essential for high performance. Despite the evident impact of these environmental factors on teachers' job performance, there has been limited research examining the interplay of physical, psychological, and social work environments in the

context of public secondary schools in Anambra State. This gap in knowledge prevents the development of targeted interventions that could address these issues and enhance teachers' performance. Given the critical role of teachers in achieving educational objectives, it was imperative to investigate how the physical, psychological, and social work environments collectively influence job performance. Understanding these correlations will provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by teachers and inform the creation of policies and practices aimed at improving their work environments, thereby fostering better educational outcomes in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between work environments and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State. Specifically, the study examined:

1. The relationship between physical work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State?
2. The relationship between psychological work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State?
3. The relationship between social work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State?

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between physical work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State?
2. What is the relationship between psychological work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State?
3. What is the relationship between social work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between physical work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State.
2. There is no significant relationship between psychological work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State.
3. There is no significant relationship between social work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State.

Research Method

The study adopted a correlational research design, suitable for examining relationships and their strengths between variables. As noted by Ifeakor (2018), this design effectively analyzes data to reveal how different aspects of the work environment relate to teachers' job performance. The research was conducted in Anambra State, located in South-East Nigeria, which features diverse cultural, geographical, and economic characteristics. The state's significant emphasis on education, with 267 public secondary schools across six education zones, makes it a suitable locale. The study's focus was heightened by the dual roles many teachers undertake, balancing business ventures with teaching duties, potentially impacting their job performance.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The target population consisted of 267 principals from the 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. As these individuals are directly responsible for overseeing teachers' performance, they provide invaluable insights into the study's focus. The study employed a census sampling technique, encompassing the entire population of 267 principals. This approach is justified due to the manageable size of the population, ensuring inclusivity and comprehensive data collection.

Instruments for Data Collection

Two structured questionnaires were utilized: The questionnaires include: the Work Environment Questionnaire (WEQ) and the Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ). The questionnaires were structured as follows:

The Work Environment Questionnaire (WEQ) is a tool used to measure aspects of an individual's work environment, such as physical, psychological, and social elements. It consists of 31 items, divided into three categories: physical (9 items), psychological (8 items), and social (14 items). The questionnaire was rated on a 4-point scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree), with a corresponding numerical values of 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively. Through its comprehensive evaluation of the work environment, it provided a detailed picture of the teacher's experience in the workplace.

The Questionnaire on Teachers' Job Performance (TJPQ) was a structured tool designed to assess various aspects of teachers' professional conduct and effectiveness in public secondary schools. The questionnaire is meant to be completed by school principals, who are in a key position to evaluate teachers' behaviours and contributions to the learning environment. It consisted of 15 items, each focusing on different dimensions of job performance, such as attendance, instructional quality, professional ethics, collaboration, and involvement in school activities. The 20 items are measured on a 4-point rating scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." This format allowed for the measurement of principals' perceptions of teachers' job performance

Face and construct validation were conducted by experts in educational management and measurement, ensuring clarity and relevance of items. Construct validity was further tested using Principal Component Analysis (PCA), yielding a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of 0.835 and significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($p < .000$). These findings confirmed the robustness of the instrument. Reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha method, with values indicating high internal consistency: WEQ clusters: Physical (0.839), Social (0.824), Psychological (0.813) and TJPQ: 0.808.

Method of Data Analysis

Data were collected through a direct delivery method, where the researcher and trained assistants administered and retrieved questionnaires from respondents in their schools, ensuring a high response rate. Data analysis employed SPSS version 23 software. Research questions were answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, while hypotheses were tested using Pearson r test for significant correlation. The correlation coefficients were interpreted using Price et al.'s (2017) scale, ranging from very low to very high relationships. Hypotheses were accepted or rejected based on a significance level of 0.05.

Results

Research question 1: What is the relationship between physical work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State?

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the physical work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State.

Table 1: Pearson Correlation Coefficient on relationship between physical work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers

		Physical Environment	Teachers Job Performance
Physical Environment	Pearson Correlation	1	.633
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	267	267
Teachers Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	.633	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	267	267

The analysis in Table 1 revealed the relationship between the physical work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State. The Pearson correlation coefficient for the relationship is $r = 0.633$, which indicated a high positive relationship between the physical work environment and job performance. The significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.000, which is less than the threshold of 0.05. This implies that the observed correlation is statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) stating that there is no significant relationship between the physical work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers was rejected.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between psychological work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State?

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between the psychological work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Coefficient on relationship between psychological work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers

		Psychological Environment	Teachers Job Performance
Psychological Environment	Pearson Correlation	1	.324
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	267	267
Teachers Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	.324	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	267	267

Table 2 revealed that the Pearson correlation coefficient is $r = 0.324$, indicating a low positive relationship between the psychological work environment and job performance. The significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.000, which is less than the threshold of 0.05. This means that the relationship is statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H₀₂) stating that there is no significant relationship between the psychological work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers was rejected.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between social work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State?

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between the social work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Coefficient on relationship between social work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers

		Social Environment	Teachers Job Performance
Social Environment	Pearson Correlation	1	.239
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	267	267
Teachers Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	.239	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	267	267

Table 3 revealed that the Pearson correlation coefficient is $r = 0.239$, indicating a low positive relationship between the social work environment and job performance. The significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 threshold, showing that the relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H₀₃) stating that there is no significant relationship between the social work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers was rejected.

Discussion

Physical Work Environment and Job Performance

The study revealed a significant high positive relationship between the physical work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State. This finding suggested that improvements in the physical work environment, such as adequate classroom facilities, proper ventilation, and other infrastructural amenities, significantly enhance teachers' ability to perform their duties effectively. A conducive physical work environment not only facilitated instructional delivery but also boosts teachers' motivation and commitment to achieving educational goals.

The findings of the current study are in strong agreement with some previous related studies, all of which highlight the critical influence of the physical work environment on job performance. For instance, Egwu et al. (2021) found a strong positive relationship between the physical work environment and teachers' job performance. Their study emphasized the importance of infrastructure quality, such as well-equipped classrooms and functional staff offices, in promoting effective teaching and learning processes. This aligns closely with the findings of the current study, as both highlight the direct and significant impact of the physical work environment on job performance. Both studies suggested that prioritizing infrastructural improvements is essential for enhancing educational outcomes.

Obi and Akudo (2021) reported a moderate positive relationship between work environment (including physical aspects) and teachers' job performance. Their study highlighted that while the physical environment is important, other factors, such as leadership style and workload, also play critical roles. Although the strength of the relationship observed in Obi and Akudo's study is slightly lower than in the current study, the agreement remains evident. Both studies recognize the physical environment as a critical predictor of job performance, though the magnitude of the impact differs, possibly due to contextual or methodological variations.

Okoli et al. (2024) examined work conditions, including physical work environments, as correlates of teachers' job commitment and performance. Their findings indicated a significant relationship, with teachers reporting that inadequate physical facilities often hinder their ability to deliver quality education. This study's findings are consistent with the current research, reaffirming the pivotal role of the physical environment in enhancing job performance. Both studies advocated for improved facilities to boost teacher satisfaction and productivity.

Psychological Work Environment and Job Performance

The study also found a significant low positive relationship between the psychological work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State. This finding indicates that while the psychological environment has an influence on teachers' performance, its impact is relatively weaker compared to other factors such as the physical work environment. The finding is consistent with the findings of Egwu et al. (2021) reported that the psychological work environment, including job security, recognition, and emotional support, had a moderate positive effect on teachers' job performance. Their study concluded that enhancing the psychological well-being of teachers fosters higher performance levels. The findings of Egwu et al. (2021) align with the current study, as both demonstrate a positive relationship. However, the magnitude of the relationship in Egwu et al. is stronger than in the current study, possibly due to variations in sample contexts or specific aspects of psychological factors analyzed.

Similarly, findings of Onwumbiko (2024) found that the psychological work environment significantly correlates with teachers' job commitment and indirectly impacts their performance. Factors such as stress management and workplace mental health resources were highlighted as critical to enhancing job satisfaction and performance. The findings align with the current study, as both indicate that the psychological work environment is a significant but not dominant factor in determining job performance. However, the current study emphasizes a low-strength relationship, while Onwumbiko's research highlights the importance of targeted interventions to strengthen this link.

The finding is also in line with Nnonyelu, et al. (2024). This study focused on the role of psychological factors, such as stress and decision-making competence, on work performance. It found a weak but positive relationship between psychological stressors and job performance, indicating that stress management capabilities contribute slightly to performance outcomes. The findings are consistent with the current study, as both observe a low positive relationship. The alignment further emphasizes that psychological factors, while relevant, may not independently drive performance as strongly as physical or social factors in the school environment.

Social Work Environment and Job Performance

Findings of the study further found a significant low positive relationship between the social work environment and job performance among public secondary school teachers in Anambra State. This implies that while the social work environment has a positive influence on job performance, its impact is minimal compared to other factors such as the physical work environment. The findings of the current study are broadly consistent with Egwu, et al. (2021), which acknowledged a positive relationship between the social work environment and job performance. This study revealed that the social work environment, including interpersonal relationships, collaboration, and support among teachers, positively affects job performance. The relationship, though significant, was found to be moderate, suggesting that social factors play a critical role in sustaining job performance. The findings of Egwu et al. somehow agree with the current study, as both indicate a positive relationship. However, the strength of the relationship in their study is higher, possibly because of their broader focus on collaborative practices and teacher support mechanisms.

The finding is also consistent with the findings of Emengini, et al. (2020). This research emphasized the role of organizational culture, which includes social interactions, mutual respect, and teamwork, in influencing teachers' job performance and work attitudes. The study found a moderate to strong positive correlation, highlighting that a supportive social environment fosters better job outcomes. The findings differ slightly

from the current study. While both confirm a positive relationship, the current study observes a weaker correlation, which might be attributed to variations in measurement scales or the specific social factors emphasized in each study. Obi and Akudo (2021) found that the social work environment, particularly the quality of teacher-principal relationships and peer collaboration, significantly predicted job performance. However, they also observed that these social factors are secondary to physical work conditions in determining performance outcomes. The findings of Obi and Akudo aligned closely with the current study. Both studies conclude that the social work environment has a positive but relatively weaker impact on job performance when compared to other workplace factors like physical or psychological conditions.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

The study revealed a significant high positive relationship between the physical work environment and teachers' job performance, highlighting the importance of a conducive physical environment in enhancing effectiveness and productivity. A significant low positive relationship was observed between the psychological work environment and job performance, indicating that psychological factors, though influential, have a smaller impact compared to physical conditions. Similarly, the social work environment showed a significant low positive relationship with job performance, suggesting that while social factors like teamwork and collaboration contributed positively; their overall influence was relatively limited.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The government, school administrators, and policymakers should prioritize the provision of adequate physical facilities, such as well-equipped classrooms, comfortable seating arrangements, and conducive teaching aids. Regular maintenance and upgrading of school infrastructure should be ensured to provide a safe and functional work environment for teachers.
2. School administrators should develop initiatives to address teachers' mental well-being, such as offering counselling services, stress management workshops, and employee assistance programs. Adequate workload distribution and policies that prevent burnout should be implemented to create a more supportive psychological environment.
3. Schools should encourage teamwork, collaboration, and positive interpersonal relationships through regular team-building activities, staff retreats, and collaborative teaching approaches. Establishing mentorship programs and open communication channels among staff can help create a supportive social environment conducive to improved job performance.
4. Policymakers should design and enforce regulations that ensure a balanced emphasis on the physical, psychological, and social aspects of the work environment. This will enable teachers to perform their duties more effectively. Investments in training programs that equip school leaders with the skills to create holistic and supportive work environments are essential.

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