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# Students perception toward education environment factors that influence academic performance

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**Abstract**--Many studies have been conducted on the education environment but very few research works are available on students' perception on the education environment toward academic performance. This necessitates this research work, to examine the key education environment factors that influence academic performance. Education environment is where students of all categories pursue the academic goals of their desires; therefore it should provide the appropriate conditions needed to influence students' aims. The researcher concentrated on the Internal and External Education Environment Factors, as the main factors according to various findings from previous researchers. Internal factors are those within the institution that have a direct influence on the students, while the external factors are those outside the institution but can affect the students if not properly controlled. The research was done at Freetown Polytechnic College in Sierra Leone, with a sample size of 150 students chosen using a basic random selection procedure. Two objectives and two hypotheses were generated. The primary data was collected using a structured Google questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. Learning resources, effective teaching and assessment are the most important attributes in the internal factor, while family size and home environment are the most critical attributes in the external factor. It was confirmed that, the internal factor has the highest influence on students' academic performance than external factor.

**Keywords**---internal factors, external factors, education environment, academic performance, assessment.

## **Introduction**

Education is one of the acknowledged qualities of an individual that aids not only in achieving desired goals but also in contributing to the community and nation's growth, Radhika Kapur (2018). Education environment contribute greatly in the achievement of the future goals of the students, Nyagosia, P.O. (2011). According to Ausubel, D. (1963), education is any knowledge which an individual achieved either formal, informal or non-formal which helps the individual to distinguish between any situations the individual finds himself or herself. Radhika Kapur believes that the education environment and educational institution where students received their education have a significant impact on their academic achievement (2018). According to the findings, the school environment and teachers' expectations of students have a significant impact on student achievement, G.Zappala & Considine (2002). According to Swee and Barry (1998), teachers working in poor schools' environment lack the basic learning facilities; have low expectations from their students that will result to poor students' academic performance. The quality of an educational system depends greatly on the teachers' qualifications, teaching experience, competency and dedication, Oluremi (2013). Teachers are facilitators impacting pupils' understanding of Owolabi principles (2012). All schools strongly emphasis the academic performance and educational attainment in every aspect of personal and professional life of the students, because emotional intelligence of an individual determines the success of an organization, K.N. Lakshmaiah and K.S. Sekhar Rao, (2018). Researchers discovered that the psychosocial atmosphere in the classroom differs depending on the type of school, including coeducational and single-sex institutions, Trickett et al. (1982). Regardless of the necessity of such research, investigations on special needs students who provide education to people with disabilities are also required, Sondai et al (2017). Special education is intended to give students with impairments with a learning environment in which they can pursue their education. Individuals' ability to appropriately process information in a manner that will allows the information to be learned and kept may be hampered by suboptimal environmental conditions at school, work, or at home, Maxwell (2010).

## **Review On Related Literature**

Literature review focuses on internal and external education environment factors that influence students' academic performance.

## **Internal Education Environment Factors**

The internal factors are key aspects within the institution that have the tendency of influencing students' academic performance. These are:-

- ❖ **Academic Professionalism and Approachability:** The professionalism and approachable attitude of teachers, according to Considine & G.Zappalà,

(2002), is critical in the process of influencing students' academic performance. Teachers been source of knowledge, they should be approachable by the students in terms of the problems and difficulties they encountered, for proper solutions and guidance towards those problems and difficulties, Srilakshmi and Dr. D. Sundari, (2018).

❖ **Learning Resources:-**

- a). **The Classroom:** The physical conditions on the classroom like seating accommodation, light, temperature, ventilation and other facilities are of concern to the authorities, Sorie Saidu Kamara and Dr. Sundari Dadhabai, (2020). According to Radhika Kapur, a suitable classroom environment will increase students' enthusiasm in studying and make them more likely to concentrate on the teacher's lecture (2018).
  - b). **Library Facilities:** According to Saenz et al (2009), students' use of the library has an impact on their performance, particularly for students who belong to the deprived, marginalized, and socioeconomically backward portions of society, who rely heavily on library resources for their education. Therefore a well equipped library will positively influence their education.
  - c). **Laboratory Facilities:** According to Barber & Mourshed (2007), their findings revealed that students remember what they see more than what they hear. Meaning, knowledge gained by laboratory activity is retained for a long time in the minds of humans. Because what you hear you can easily forget, what you see you can remember and what you do you understand. Therefore the education environment should be able to provide laboratories that will influence students' academic performance.
- ❖ **Effective Teaching:** Teaching is the process of imparting relevant knowledge, cultivating expected new confidence, and changing pupils' attitudes and behaviours, Sondai et al (2017). An effective teacher, according to Chan (1996), masters the numerous strategies and procedures that are appropriate for various sorts of students in any educational environment, there by influences the academic performance of the students.
- ❖ **Language Proficiency:** According to Carpenter, (1995), if students has issues in understanding the language been used in the academic process it becomes a big challenge to them, because language is one among the main factors that has so much influence on the success of a student. According to Harb & ElShaarawi (2006), English proficiency is the most critical element that influences students' accomplishment, because if students have a good communication skills and a firm command of the English language their learning efficiency will improve. Communication skills boost students' achievement, because it is a characteristic that positively linked students' performance in open learning, Abdullah (2011).
- ❖ **Assessment:** Assessment is a continuous process that involves four factors: the teacher, the student, the evaluation, and the situation, Mandinach & Jackson, (2012). This statement is in line with Pedder and James (2012), who claim that teacher and student interaction is a fundamental aspect of teaching and evaluation. A poor understanding of the assessment standards prevents lecturers from performing accurate and appropriate on the students' work. As a result, this situation is likely to raise uncertainty and create mistrust among parents and various parties towards the reporting of lecturers' assessment. Moreover, the quality of the evaluation may be questioned too.

### **External Education Environment Factors**

These are factors outside the institution but have strong relationship with the education environment, if neglected it will seriously affect students' academic performance. These are:-

- ❖ **Home Environment:** The house has an impact on an individual, according to Ajila & Olutola (2007), because parents are the first socialising agents in a child's life; therefore location and the type of home have a greater influence on the student. According to the research reviewed, there is a general understanding about the impact of the home environment on student's academic success, Chan (1996).
- ❖ **Role of Parents:** The parents are quick to notice the weakness and strength of their children and smart to take responsibility for providing help, Bakare, C.G.M. (1975). Parent's socio-economic condition, (e.g. professional qualification, income and occupation) is also linked to a child's intellectual progress, Adams, A. (1996). As a result, pupils whose parents have a high socioeconomic position will perform better than students whose parents' socioeconomic status is low. Gardy and Akbay (2015).
- ❖ **Motivation:** Research shows that motivation guides a learner to have a definite goal, direct the learner appropriately and helps to achieve a set goal Kudari, J.M. (2016).It influence the learner because it gives satisfaction to do more, since the more the motivation the better the learning. Lack of motivation leads to a lack of interest, excitement, and dedication to the learning process, as well as low academic accomplishment, M.J. Maina (2010).
- ❖ **Family Size:** Job satisfaction is as result of the interaction between the employees and employer towards job and work environment, ShahnazUddin and Dr. K.S. Sekhara Rao (2018). Students belonging to a small family size with outstanding social economic background will perform better than those students from a large family size with outstanding social economic backgrounds, Grady and Akbay (2015).

### **Significance of the Study**

Having an understanding of the education environment will help both the education authorities, parents and students in diverse ways. The education authorities will be able to identify the weakness and strength of the institution. The parents will be able to make decision as to which institution to enrol their children and students will have the assurance of getting a stable and secured job after graduation. Therefore, this research work will technically analyse the internal and external factors in the education environment that will lead to a successful students' academic achievement.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To identify the most critical internal and external education environment factors.
2. To determine which of the element (internal and external) has the greatest influence on students' academic success.

**Hypotheses**

*H<sub>1</sub> In addition to students' academic performance, internal factors have a positive impact. H<sub>2</sub> In addition to students' academic performance, external factors have a positive impact.*

**Research Methodology****Research design and instrument**

The researchers conducted an exploratory research design to assess students' evaluation skills for acquiring a better knowledge about the education environment; by exploring students' perception towards education environment factors that will influence academic performance. The study took place at Sierra Leone's Freetown Polytechnic College. 150 students were chosen from all the departments in the college for the study, using simple random sampling technique. Based on previous literature reviews gathered, a structured Google questionnaire was designed with five points Likert scale to collect primary data. Google questionnaire was used because of: its uniformity in the direction of the questions, all study respondents' answer the same statements, respondents will answer all the questions with greater flexibility and give more honest answers according to Punch (1994). Further, the approach has the ability of gathering data quickly and cheaply as it simply requires mailing costs, Creswell (2012). The Google questionnaire has two sections. Section one is demographic information of respondents that is department and level education. Section two has 27 statements and one open ended question designed to measure the insight of the students in terms of internal factors, external factors and academic performance. The measuring tool been a likert scale, is specifically designed to measure the perception of the students by rating their agreement on statement, "5" "Strongly agreed" to "1" "Strongly disagreed."

**Collection of Information**

Primary data was collected from the students in the college by using structured Google questionnaire and secondary data from literature reviews of previous researches related to the study. Only 150 questionnaires were completely filled out of 180 questionnaires administered to the respondents, for measuring the students' perception on the education environment.

**Data Analysis**

Frequency tables with graphs were used to analyze the demographic data and objective one, while objective two was analyze using descriptive statistics, multiple regression analysis at 0.05 level of significant.

## Demographic Data Analysis

### Respondents' Department

Table 1. Various departments and their percentage.

Departments	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Education	37	24.7	24.7	24.7
Arts & Humanity	44	29.3	29.3	54.0
Science	19	12.7	12.7	66.7
Valid Agric. & H. Econ.	14	9.3	9.3	76.0
P.H.E	9	6.0	6.0	82.0
Languages	27	18.0	18.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	-

Source; Survey Data May, 2021

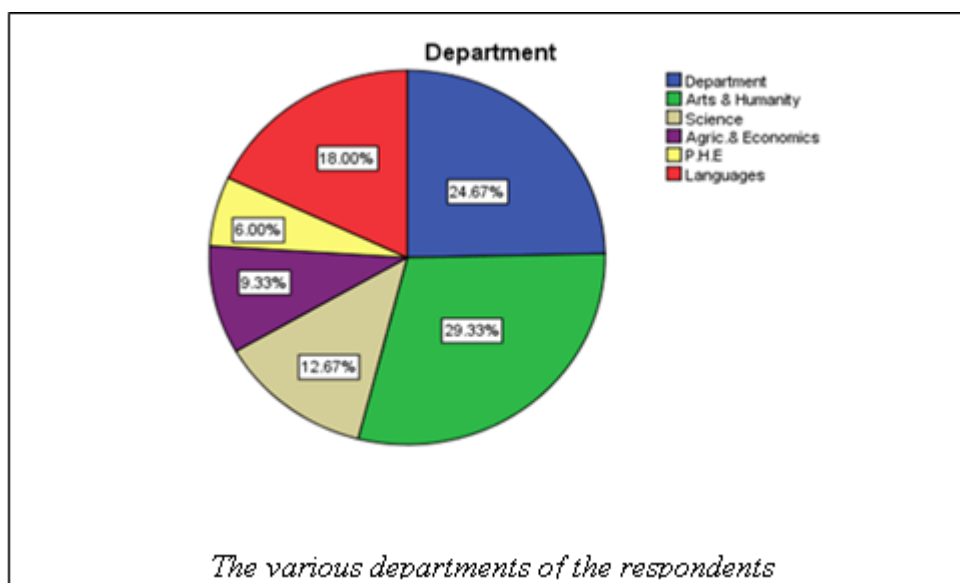


Figure 1: Shows students' percentage in their various departments

According to figure 1, it was discovered that a larger number of the respondents were from Arts and Humanity department with 44(29.3%) followed by Education department with 37(24.7%). 27(18%), 19(12.7%), 14(9.3%) and 9(6%) were for Languages, Sciences, Agric. and H.Economics (Agriculture and Home Economic) and P.H.E (Physical Health Education) departments respectively. It was confirmed that the most populated departments are Arts and Humanity and Education while the least populated department was P.H.E.

### Level of Education

Table2. Shows the frequency of levels of education of respondents

	Year	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	First year	32	21.3	21.3	21.3
	Second year	52	34.7	34.7	56.0
	Third year	66	44.0	44.0	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	-

Source; Survey Data May, 2021

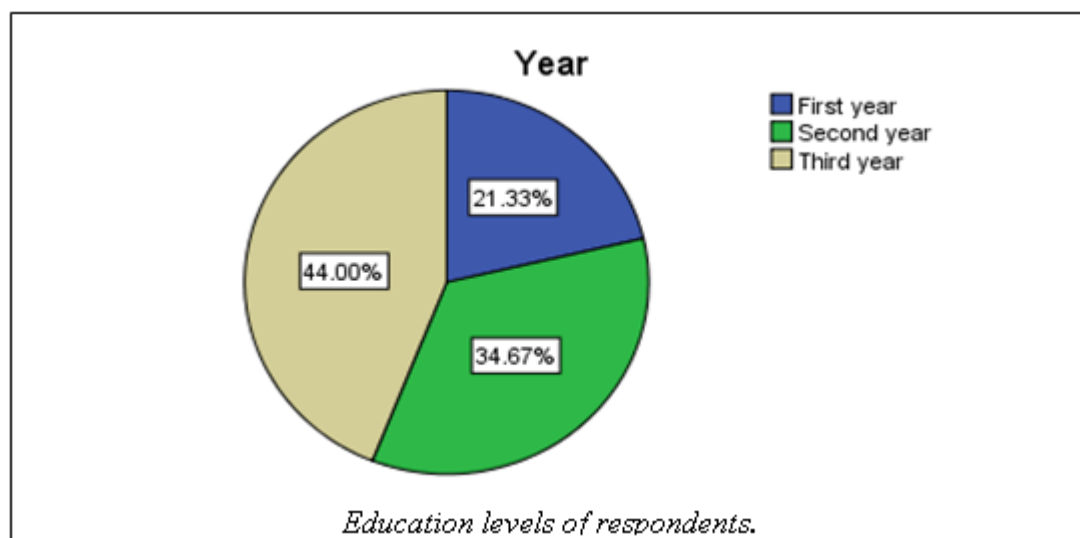


Figure 2. Shows the percentages of the level of education of respondents

In figure 2 it was confirmed that 66(44%) of the respondents were in their third year, Next second year students with 52(34.67%) and least is first year students with 32(21.33%). Third year and second year students were mostly targeted because they have spent more years in the college, therefore they will be in better position to give accurate responses than the first year students.

### Analysis of Objective One

**Objective1a. Internal factor:** To identify the most critical internal factor that influences students' academic performance

Table 3: Frequency of the internal education environment factors.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Academic professionalism	32	21.33	21.33	21.33
Learning Resources	44	29.34	29.34	50.67
Effective Teaching.	36	24	24	74.67

Language proficiency.	5	3.33	3.33	78
Assessment.	33	22	22	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	

Source; Survey Data May, 2021

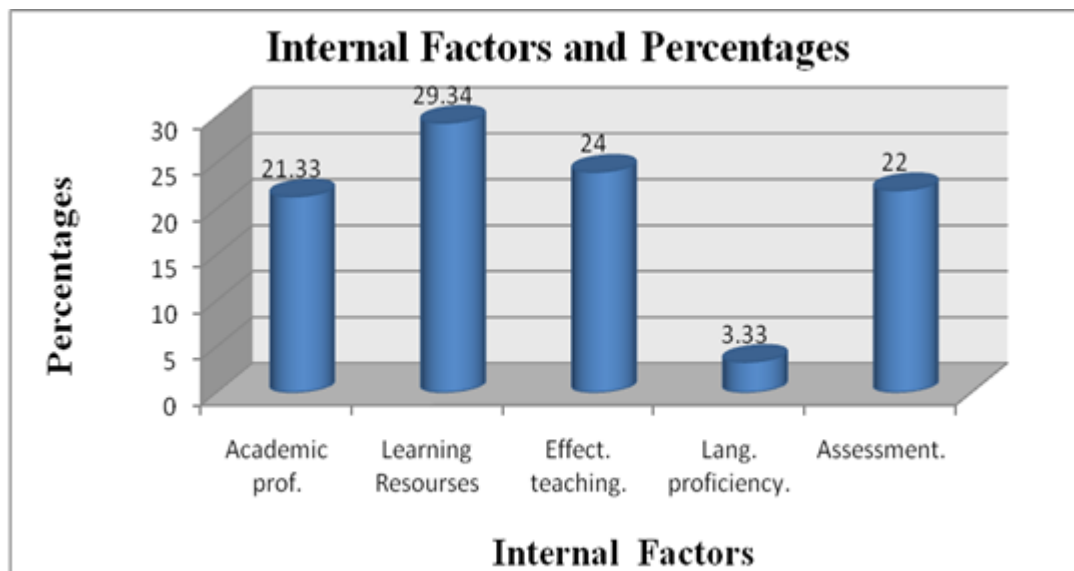


Figure 3. Figure 3 show the percentages of the internal education environment factors.

According to the table3 and figure3, learning resources has the highest percentage (29.34%) among the internal education environment factors that influence academic performance of students, followed by effective teaching with 24%, next by assessment 22%, academic professionalism 21.33%, and language proficiency 3.33%. Therefore according to objective one, learning resources is the most critical internal factor positively influencing students' academic performance.

**Objective1b. External factors:** To identify the most critical external factor that influences students' academic performance

Table 4: Frequency of the external education environment factors

External Factors	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Home environment.	40	26.67	26.67	26.67
Role of parent.	31	20.67	20.67	47.34
Motivation.	35	23.33	23.33	70.67
Family size.	44	29.33	29.33	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	

Source; Survey Data May, 2021

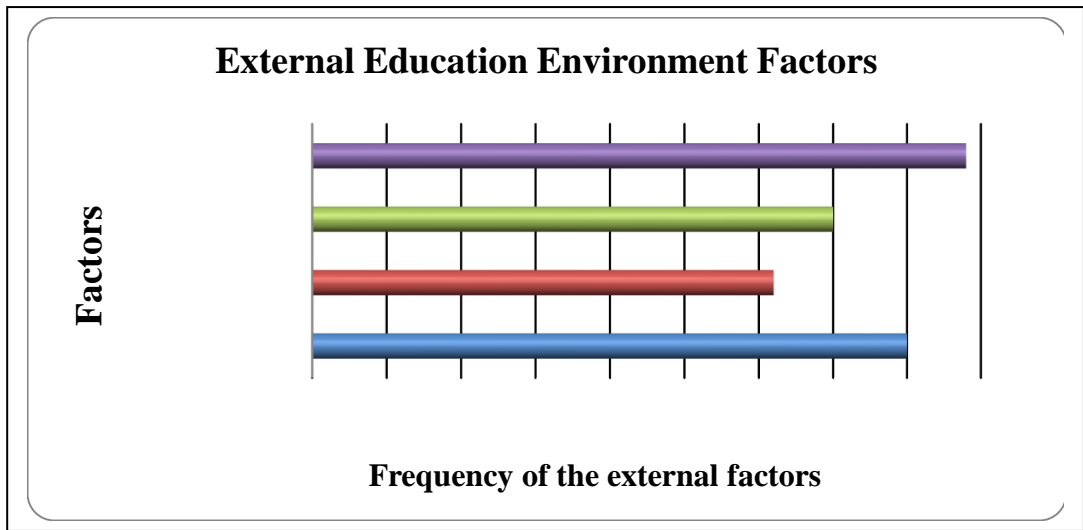


Figure4: Show the percentage of the external education environment factor.

Table 4 and figure 4 revealed that 29.33% of the respondents rated family size as the most important external education environment factor that affect students’ academic performance, next home environment 26.67%, motivation 23.33% and role of parent 20.67% respectively. According to objective two, it was confirmed that family size was the most critical external factor.

**Analysis of Objective Two**

Table 5: Reliability of the scale of the research instrument

Statistics on Reliability	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.746	16

All of the items in Table 5 have Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.746, higher than 0.70, indicating that the questionnaire was extremely reliable.

Table 6, shows the descriptive statistics of the internal and external factors  
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Academic Perf.	150	2.80	5.00	3.8907	.46780
Internal Factor	150	2.29	4.57	3.9801	.60314
External Factor	150	2.25	5.00	3.4912	.38797
Valid N (listwise)	150				

The findings in table 6 revealed that, internal and external education environment factors have Means of 3.9801 and 3.4912, Standard deviations of 0.60314 and

0.38797 respectively, indicates a strong positive relationship with education environment. The proximity of the difference between the mean and standard deviation of each factor, as well as the deviation between the factors summed towards means and standard deviations, confirms all of this.

### Analysis of Multiple Regression Coefficients

The internal and external education environment factors are used to analyze Students' academic achievement. Multiple regression analysis (comprise of model summary, ANOVA and Coefficient) was used because "it is a reliable method of identifying which factor among the factors (Internal and External factor) that has the greatest influence, matters most, which one can be ignored besides the independency rate of variables that impact with one another".

Table 7 Model summary of regression analysis  
Summary of the Model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.122 <sup>a</sup>	.015	.002	.46745

- a. Predictors: (Constant), External Factor, Internal Factor  
b. Dependent Variable: Academic performance

Table 7 illustrates that "R" determines the quality of the dependent variable's prediction, with a "R" value of 0.122 indicating a 12.2% positive prediction level. The "R<sup>2</sup>" score of 0.015 indicates that the dependent variable has a very low variability that can be clarified using independent variables. Nevertheless, "Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>" indicates the percentage of variance in academic achievement as measured by independent variables. Therefore adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of 0.002 specifies a zero percent accountancy but a positive variation between the independents variables.

Table 8. Shows the statistical analysis of variance  
ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.486	2	.243	1.112	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	32.121	147	.219		
	Total	32.607	149			

- a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance  
b. Predictors: (Constant), External Factor, Internal Factor

The analysis of variance in table 8 revealed that, the mean square is achieved by dividing the Sum of Squares by the corresponding df (degree of freedom). However, F-ratio been the main concern in this table is used to verify whether the regression model is a good fit for the data. Because the p-value is less than 0.05, the independent variables statistically significantly predict the dependent variable, as shown in the table.  $F(2, 147) = 1.112$ , (the regression model is a good fit of the data)

Table 9. Shows the outcome of regression coefficient analysis  
Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.656	.380		9.619	.000
1 Internal Factor	.139	.103	.115	1.352	.008
External Factor	.065	.066	.084	.980	.009

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

Table 9 shows the value that indicates individual contribution of the predictors to the model, and the relationship between the students’ academic performance and each predictor. If the value is positive, then relationship between the predictor and the outcome will be positive, where as a negative value represents a negative relationship. When all other independent factors are maintained constant, the unstandardized coefficient shows how much the dependent variable fluctuates with independent variables.

According to regression equation:

$$AP = a + IF x_1 + EF x_2 \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where:

AP = Academic Performance, a = Constant, IF = Internal Factor and EF = External Factor.

Therefore  $AP = 3.656 + 0.139x_1 + 0.065x_2 \dots \dots \dots (2)$ .

Equation 2 reveals that if the internal factor increase by one unit, there will be a corresponding increase of 0.139 on students’ academic performance keeping all other variables constant. “**B**” under unstandardized coefficient indicates positive values both internal and external factors. Implies that, there is a direct relationship for internal and external factor on students’ academic performance in Freetown Polytechnic College. It was also revealed on the model that the internal factor causes 13.9% variation on students’ academic performance in the positive direction, and significant p-value less than 0.05. Hence H<sub>1</sub> was accepted stated a positive influence of the internal factor in addition to students’ academic performance. Again, the external factor causes 6.5% variation positively and significant p- value less than 0.05, therefore H<sub>2</sub> was also accepted, According to the study, external factors have a favorable influence on pupils’ academic achievement. In the model, the t- value for the regression coefficient is used to evaluate if the internal and external factors are significant predictors on students’ academic performance. The results of the t- value confirmed that, internal factor (t= 1.352; 0.008 < 0.05), External factor (t= 0.980; 0.009 < 0.05) because their p-values are less than 0.05, the factors are statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Beta (β) result under standardized coefficient in table 9 shows the influence of internal factor and external factor. It can be contingent that the internal factor (β= 0.115) has the highest influence than the external factor (β= 0.084).

### Suggestions for Open Ended Question

The following are the suggestions which the students highlighted for the improvement of the education environment for effective academic performance. The table below shows the frequencies and percentages of the responses received from 150 respondents.

Table 10: Shows percentages of respondents' suggestions

No	Responses(N=150)	Frequ ency	perce nt	Valid percen t	cumulativ e percent
1	There should be well equipped library, laboratory and classroom with needed learning materials	51	34	34	34
2	There should be highly experienced, qualified, honest, dedicated lecturers	23	15	15	49
3	The compound should be spacious, clean, well taking care-of.	13	9	9	58
4	The students suggested that lecturers should be punctual, effective in teaching and waste no time	36	24	24	82
5	All forms of assessment should be given fix date to the knowing of the students well before the assessment date.	27	18	18	100
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-</b>

Source; Survey Data May, 2021

According table 10, majority (34%) of the respondents suggested well equipped library, laboratory and classroom with appropriate learning materials, followed by 24% respondents suggested lecturers who are punctual, effective in teaching and manage time, 18% suggested that assessment should be well coordinated in the interest of the students, 15% emphasis that the lecturers should be highly experienced, qualified, honest, dedicated, and 9% suggested that the institution should be spacious, clean, well taking care-of, to influence students' academic performance.

### Results and Suggestions

- ✦ Bulks of the students are in Arts & humanity and Education departments and nearly half of them are in year three.
- ✦ Learning resources, effective teaching and assessment are the most important attributes in the internal factor while family size and home environment are the main attributes in external factor.
- ✦ The closeness of the means and standard deviations of the factors indicates students' agreement that, the factors can influence students' academic performance.

- ✦ Because their p-values are less than 0.05, the internal and external factors are statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Again, there is positive influence for both internal and external factors on students' academic performance.
- ✦ Hypothesis H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>2</sub> for internal and external factors respectively were all accepted because their p-values are less than 0.05, meaning both the factors have influence on students' academic performance.
- ✦ Internal factor has the highest influence on students' academic performance with a  $\beta$ -value of 0.115, than external factor with a  $\beta$ -value of 0.084
- ✦ The most important suggestions gave by students for influencing students are: well equipped library, laboratory and classrooms; lecturers should be punctual, teach effectively and assessment should be done at the appropriate time in a conducive atmosphere.

### **Discussion**

It was discovered that in the internal factors, learning resources (classroom, library and laboratory) was highly rated by respondent for influencing students' academic performance. Because if the institution has well equipped classrooms, libraries and laboratories, the students' academic performance will be influenced, this is in favour of Radhika Kapur (2018), Seanz et al. (2009) and Barber & Mourshed (2007) research findings. Followed by effective teaching, meaning if the teachers are highly committed, punctual and effectively teach the students what they suppose to learning, their academic performance will be definitely influence as also discovered by the findings of Sondai et al. (2017). Assessment is third rated internal factor, that if lecturers did accurate and appropriates assessment of the students it will influence their performance. But if they have poor assessment standards, the quality of the evaluation will be questioned hence negatively influence students' academic performance. In the external factors, family size is the most highly rated for influence students' performance. Because a small family size with a strong socio-economic status will influence students' academic performance greatly than a large family size with a strong socio-economic status, as confirmed by Grady & Akbay, (2015). Next, home environment with extended family that is located in a deprived area, peer group pressure will negatively influence students' academic performance as evidence by Ajila and Olutola (2007).

### **Conclusion**

For an education environment to influence students' academic performance, learning resources, effective teaching, assessment, family size and home environment should be highly considered. Lecturers who are dedicated, punctual and honest, high experience teaching and can manage time should be employed. Well equipped library, laboratory, classroom and internet facility for the improvement of the education environment, should be made available in the college for both students and lecturers utilization.

## Suggestion

For more confirmations of the findings of the research, I suggest that:

- ❖ The same or similar research can be conducted in a university of the same Country or polytechnic college of a different Country.
- ❖ Research scholars can use the same topic for their thesis.
- ❖ Researchers may use the same topic but increase the sample size and use different method(s) of data analysis.

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