

# **FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING IN NORTHEAST NIGERIAN POLYTECHNICS**

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## **Abstract**

This study investigates the factors influencing students' academic performance in financial accounting across polytechnics in the northeast Nigeria. The study employed a quantitative approach to analyses from both students and lecturers across these polytechnics in the region. Data for the study was obtained through the issuance of well-structured questionnaires to the target respondents. The study identifies key factors including socio-economic background, teaching methods, student motivation and institutional factors that contributes to students' academic performance in the subject under consideration. Statistical analysis reveals correlation between these variables provides a valuable insight to the study. In view of the foregoing, the study recommended the adoption of interactive teaching methods by lecturers, the study equally recommended the improvement of learning environment as well as the provision of adequate learning resources.

**Keywords:** Students Academic Performance, Factors, Financial Accounting, Northeast Polytechnics, Nigeria

## **INTRODUCTION**

Financial accounting is core course in the business and management sciences, essential for building a solid foundation in financial literacy and managerial decision-making. However, students often experience challenges in grasping the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject matter, which impacts their academic performance (Mustapha et al., 2023). Academic performance in financial accounting is fundamental for students enrolled in polytechnic education in Nigeria. Financial accounting forms the bedrock of many business-related disciplines, and failure in this subject can significantly affect students overall academic progression and future employment prospects. However, students' performance in financial accounting has been notably poor in recent years, raising concerns among academia and policymakers (Adeyemi & Ukoha, 2021).

Despite its importance, students' academic performance in financial accounting remains low in many polytechnics, especially in the northeast region of Nigeria. Factors contributing to this poor performance remain underexplored. Existing literatures tends to focus on secondary education or higher institutions such as universities, thereby leaving a gap in understanding polytechnic-level challenges (Mustapha et al., 2023). This study aims to fill this gap by identifying key factors that influences students' academic performance in financial accounting in northeast Nigerian polytechnics.

### Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

- i) What are the socio-economic factors affecting students' academic performance in financial accounting in northeast polytechnics?
- ii) How do teaching methods influence students' academic performance in financial accounting in northeast polytechnics?
- iii) To what extent does students' motivation affect academic performance in financial accounting in northeast polytechnics?
- iv) What institutional factors contribute to the academic performance of students in financial accounting in northeast polytechnics?

### Objectives of the study

The objectives of this research are:

- i) To analyse the socio-economic factors that affect students' academic performance in financial accounting in northeast polytechnics?
- ii) To assess how teaching methods influence students' academic performance in financial accounting in northeast polytechnics?
- iii) To examine the role of students' motivation on academic success
- iv) To evaluate the institutional factors influencing students' academic performance in financial accounting in northeast polytechnics?

### Significance of the study

This study provides valuable insight into the factors that affect students' academic performance in financial accounting in northeast polytechnics. The findings will be of immense significance to lecturers on how to adapt their teaching methods to enhance students' understanding of financial accounting concepts, administrators, and policymakers design strategies to teaching and learning processes, ensuring better outcomes for students, and students by helping them identify key areas for intervention. Furthermore, it contributes to the broader literature on polytechnic education in Nigeria.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discussed literature relevant to the variables of the study, the review will cover socio-economic factors, teaching strategies, students' motivation, and institutional influences.

**Socio-economic factors:** Socio-economic background, including parental income and educational level, has been found to significantly affect students' academic performance in financial accounting (Bello & Danladi, 2021).

**Teaching methods:** Teaching methods, particularly interactive and technology-driven methods, have been shown to improve students' understanding of financial accounting concepts (Garba et al., 2023). Interactive and student-

centered approaches such as group discussions and case studies significantly improve students understanding of financial accounting concepts (Adeyemi, 2021).

**Student motivation:** Students that are intrinsically motivated tends to perform better academically (Oluwole & Adebayo, 2020). Students that are motivated by future career prospects perform better in accounting subjects compared to those who lacks a clear sense of purpose (Ahmed, 2022).

**Institutional factors:** Institutional support, such as access to learning materials and well-trained lecturers, is critical to improving academic outcomes (Eze, 2021). Olofin, (2021), observed that students with access to modern accounting software and practical tools tend to perform better in financial accounting courses.

### Theoretical Review

This study was guided by the theory of educational productivity which has been propounded by Welberg, P. (1981). The theory insist effectiveness of any learning program to be in line with social-emotional influences, classroom management, parental support, student-teacher interactions, social-behavioral attributes, motivational-effective attributes, the peer group, school culture, and classroom climate as the most significant attributes which influences learning and academic performance.

### Empirical literature

Accounting education is viewed as all concepts, courses and standard provided by programs and disciplines for students to practice the profession of accounting and auditing (Alshurafat, AlShbail, Msasdeh, Dahmash, & Al-Msiedeen, 2021). Mohammad, (2020) conducted a study to examine the factors that influence the performance of pre-diploma students in accounting subject.

The factors examine were exposure, gender, interest and parental influence. The results revealed that exposure and interest had significant difference in the academic performance.

Friday, (2020). Found a significant relationship between school environment and academic performance among students. Class size, instructional facilities, peer relationship as well as teacher/student relationship, school location and motivation have a significant impact on academic performance of students. Roebuck, (2020). Papageorgiou (2019), conducts a study to investigate whether prior accounting knowledge of students enrolling in higher education and lecture attendance have any influence in their academic performance. It was revealed that a significant association existed between the two factors and academic performance. Rossouw (2018) conducted a study to investigate language of instruction and its effect on the performance of undergraduate accounting students at a South African university. The study used questionnaires to obtain students' and lecturers' opinion matters affecting language of instruction. Results showed that home-language instruction leading to slightly better results at tertiary level. The study concluded that the choice of language of instruction is not significant to students' performance. Joynt, (2022). Opined that introductory program introduced to students without accounting background improved their academic performance positively. On the other hand, Rossouw and Brink (2021).

Found that students who changed their major to accounting after the first year of study without accounting background, succeeded in graduating with an accounting degree after three years. Similarly, Brook and Roberts (2021). Suggested that mathematics and accounting subjects taken in high school are significant indicators of students' performance at tertiary level. Tapia-Fonuem et al. (2020). Opined that various dimensions of school environment such as classroom, school yard, libraries and student's relationship, teaching methods, evaluation system, values, social co-existence and sustainability have a significant impact on student's academic performance. Arianpoor and Khayoon, (2021). Claimed that students' eagerness to learn accounting is negatively associated with anxiety, implying that students will not be eager to learn accounting when anxiety is high. Some students face extreme pressure when learning accounting, thereby resulting to a deterioration of mental health arising from difficulty and stress of learning the course (Isong et al., 2020). Tapia-Fonuem et al., (2020). Opined that various dimensions of school environment such as classroom, school yard, libraries and student's relationship, teaching methods, evaluation system, values, social co-existence and sustainability have a significant impact on student's academic performance. Arianpoor and Khayoon, (2021). Claimed that students' eagerness to learn accounting is negatively associated with anxiety, implying that students will not be eager to learn accounting when anxiety is high. Some students face extreme pressure when learning accounting, thereby resulting to a deterioration of mental health arising from difficulty and stress of learning the course (Isong et al., 2020).

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive survey research design to the factors influencing students' performance in financial accounting. Data for the study was obtained from both students and lecturers a well-structured questionnaire in the selected polytechnics in the northeast Nigeria.

Stratified random sampling technique was used to arrive at the sample size of the study.

Data collected for the study was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, tables and charts were used to present the results. Correlation and regression analysis was employed to test the relationships between the variables of the study.

### 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section discussed the results obtained from the analysis of the variables of the study. Socioeconomic factors and academic performance

Table 4.1, shows the influence of socio-economic factors on academic performance. The results revealed that students from lower-income backgrounds tends to perform poorly in financial accounting courses compared to those from higher-income backgrounds at ( $p < 0.05$ ) significance level.

| Variables | Frequency | Percentage (%) | Mean score |
|-----------|-----------|----------------|------------|
|-----------|-----------|----------------|------------|

## Research Article

|                        |     |     |     |
|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Low-income students    | 120 | 40% | 2.1 |
| Middle-income students | 90  | 30% | 3.0 |
| High-income students   | 90  | 30% | 3.5 |

## Teaching methods and academic performance

Table 4.2, revealed that students that are exposed to participatory teaching methods such as group discussions and the use of information communication technology (ICT) performed better than those taught through traditional teaching methods at ( $p < 0.01$ ) significance level.

| Teaching methods  | Mean score |
|-------------------|------------|
| Lecture method    | 2.2        |
| Group discussions | 3.4        |
| Use of ICT        | 3.6        |

## Students' motivation and academic performance

The regression results indicates a significant relationship between student motivation and academic performance ( $p < 0.05$ ). Which shows that highly motivated students had better academic performance outcomes.

## Institutional factors and academic performance

The availability of learning resources, including textbooks and access to qualified lecturers, have a significant impact on performance at ( $p < 0.01$ ).

Findings from the study support previous researches, highlighting that socio-economic background teaching methods significantly influence academic performance (Ahmed, 2022). Similarly, the role of motivation was also critical, corroborating the findings of (Oluwole & Adebayo, 2020). Institutional support remains a fundamental factor for students' success.

**5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study identified key factors affecting students' academic performance in financial accounting in northeast Nigerian polytechnics. Socio-economic background, teaching methods, student motivation, and institutional factors all play significant roles, addressing these issues through target interventions will be essential in improving student outcomes. It is against these background that the study put forward the following recommendations

**Recommendations:**

The following recommendations have been put forward by the study:

- 1) Adoption of interactive teaching methods: lecturers should adopt interactive teaching strategies such as group discussions and case studies to engage students and improve their understanding of financial accounting.
- 2) Improvement of learning environment: polytechnic administrators should ensure that classrooms are conducive for learning by addressing issues such as overcrowding and lighting'
- 3) Enhancing students' motivation: career counseling services should be provided to assist students see the relevance of financial accounting to their future careers, which will increase their motivation to perform well.
- 4) Provision of adequate learning resources: polytechnics should invest in modern learning resources such as accounting software and updated textbooks to support students learning experience.

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