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## THE IMPACT OF CLASSROOM DESIGN ON STUDENT LEARNING AND PROGRESS IN PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE PORT HARCOURT METROPOLIS

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### Abstract

*The study examines the impact of classroom design on student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The study adopted the descriptive research design was used in the study. The study was guided by three research questions and three hypotheses. The population of the study consisted of 3412 (three thousand four hundred and twelve) students drawn from the 253 approved secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The sample size of the study is 620 (six hundred and twenty) students who are drawn from the population of 3412 students thereby making 18% of the total population which was determined using the simple random sampling technique while the stratified random sampling technique was used to determine the sample size distribution among the male and female teachers for the schools. A self-created questionnaire with the title; Impact of Classroom Design on Student Learning and Progress Questionnaire (ICDSLPO) was the tool utilized to gather data. Mean and standard deviation were used as statistical tools to answer the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using Independent t-test with the aid of SPSS Version 26.0. The results of the study revealed that the overall physical design of the classroom such as lighting, layout and technology has an impact on student learning and progress. The study concluded that the physical design of the classroom had little impact on student learning and progress when taken as a whole. Based on findings, the study recommended among others that school administrators and teachers should focus on the specific aspects of the physical environment that can have an impact on student learning and progress.*

**Keywords:** Physical Design, Classroom, Lighting, Layout, Technology, Student Learning and Progress.

## INTRODUCTION

Student learning and progress are complex and multifaceted, influenced by a variety of factors. One important factor is the classroom design. Classroom design encompasses a wide range of elements, including the layout of the room, the lighting, the acoustics, the technology, and the aesthetics. Each of these elements can have an impact on how students learn and progress (Smith et al., 2019). The classroom design is an essential factor in student learning and progress. Studies have shown that various aspects of the classroom environment can influence learning outcomes, including physical layout, lighting, acoustics, and technology (Lee & Olson, 2017). Moreover, the social climate of the classroom, or the emotional and interpersonal dynamics of the learning environment, also play a crucial role in student learning and progress. The physical layout of the classroom can have a direct impact on student learning. For example, research has shown that classrooms with open layouts, natural light, and a variety of furniture options can promote creativity and engagement. In contrast, classrooms with a more traditional layout, limited natural light, and rows of desks can lead to reduced engagement and even feelings of confinement. The use of technology in the classroom can also be a significant factor (Hassan & Othman, 2016). For example, interactive whiteboards, document cameras, and other tools can enhance student learning by promoting active participation and collaboration.

Lighting is another key element of classroom design that can affect student learning. Natural light, in particular, has been shown to improve attention, mood, and overall academic performance. In contrast, poor lighting can cause eye strain and even headaches, which can negatively affect students' ability to focus and learn. In addition to the physical elements of the classroom, the social climate also plays a significant role in student learning. A positive classroom climate, with supportive and respectful relationships between students and teachers, can improve motivation, engagement, and achievement (Anderman & Anderman, 2010). Finally, the emotional climate of the classroom, or the emotional well-being of students and teachers, is also an important consideration. A positive emotional climate, with a focus on empathy, trust, and respect, can help to create a safe and supportive environment for learning. On the other hand, a negative emotional climate, with high levels of stress or conflict, can lead to disengagement and poor academic performance. In summary, the physical and social environments of the classroom can have a powerful impact on student learning and progress.

In terms of designing an effective learning environment, research has shown that certain principles can be applied to create a space that supports student learning. For example, the principle of "zone of proximal development" suggests that students learn best when they are challenged just beyond their current level of understanding (Mercer, 2017). In terms of classroom design, this principle can be applied by creating spaces that allow for both independent and collaborative learning. The principle of "scaffolding" also suggests that the learning environment should provide support for students to gradually increase their level of independence. Another important principle is "connectedness," which refers to the need for students to feel a sense of belonging in the classroom. This principle can be applied through the design of the classroom by creating spaces that encourage social interaction and collaboration. The principle of "intrinsic motivation" suggests that students are more engaged when they are motivated by their interests and goals, rather than external rewards or punishments (Deci et al., 2011). In terms of classroom design, this principle can be applied by providing opportunities for students to pursue their interests and explore their passions.

Moving on to the role of the teacher in the learning environment, research has shown that a teacher's attitude and demeanour can have a significant impact on student learning. The

principle of "emotional contagion" suggests that a teacher's emotions can be "caught" by students, and can influence their own emotions and behaviors (Nye et al., 2004). For example, a teacher who is enthusiastic and positive can help to create a motivating and engaging learning environment. Conversely, a teacher who is negative or unsupportive can lead to disengagement and a lack of motivation in students. In terms of specific teaching practices, research has identified several strategies that can support student learning. The principle of "modelling" suggests that teachers should demonstrate the desired behaviours and skills that they want students to learn. In addition, the principle of "reflection" suggests that students should be given opportunities to reflect on their learning and progress. Other principles include "feedback," which refers to providing specific and timely feedback to students, and "differentiation," which refers to tailoring instruction to meet the individual needs of students (Hattie, 2009).

Another important aspect of the learning environment is the use of technology. Technology can be used to support student learning in several ways, including through the use of online resources, simulations, and collaborative tools. The "SAMR" model is a useful framework for evaluating the use of technology in the classroom. "SAMR" stands for "substitution," "augmentation," "modification," and "redefinition" (Puentedura, 2010). Each of these levels represents a different level of integration of technology into the learning environment. To conclude, the learning environment is a complex and dynamic system that involves many interconnected factors. The physical and social environments, the role of the teacher, and the use of technology all play a role in creating a space that is conducive to student learning. By understanding and applying the principles and strategies outlined above, teachers can create a learning environment that is engaging, supportive, and motivating for students. In turn, this can lead to improved learning outcomes and better preparation for the world beyond the classroom.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The learning environment plays a crucial role in student learning, and research has shown that it can impact a wide range of outcomes, including engagement, motivation, and performance. The research on classroom design and student learning is limited, and there is a lack of understanding of the specific factors that make up a supportive and effective learning environment. In addition, many studies have focused on the use of technology in the classroom without considering how it can be used to support different types of learning. To address these gaps in the research, this study will investigate the relationship between classroom design and student learning. Specifically, it will explore how physical elements such as lighting, layout, and technology can impact student engagement and achievement. This study is significant because it will provide a better understanding of the factors that contribute to effective learning environments and will help to inform the design of future classrooms.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

This study aims to examine the impact of classroom design on student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The specific objectives are to:

1. Investigate how lighting impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis
2. Examine how layout impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis

3. Determine how technology impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

### **Research Question**

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

1. How does lighting impact student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?
2. How does layout impact student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?
3. How does technology impact student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated and statistically tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean rating on how lighting impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis
2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating on how layout impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean rating on how technology impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

### **Theoretical Framework**

A theoretical framework is a way of organizing and synthesizing the existing literature on a topic. In this case, the theoretical framework would outline the key theories and concepts that are relevant to understanding the impact of classroom design on student learning and progress. The theoretical framework for this study is anchored on the constructivist learning theory.

### **Constructivist Learning Theory**

The constructivist learning theory was developed by Jean Piaget in the early 20th century. According to this theory, learning is an active process in which the learner constructs meaning from their experiences and interactions with the world (Moore, 2009). The theory emphasizes the importance of exploration, problem-solving, and collaboration in the learning process. It also suggests that learners need to be actively engaged and have the opportunity to make connections between new information and their existing knowledge. The core attribute of the constructivist learning theory is the idea that knowledge is actively constructed by the learner. This is in contrast to more traditional theories of learning, which tend to view knowledge as something that is passively absorbed from the environment. In constructivist learning, the learner is an active participant in the learning process, rather than a passive recipient of information (Van Sledright, 2008).

In the context of classroom design, the constructivist learning theory suggests that the physical environment should be designed to support exploration, problem-solving, and collaboration. For example, this might involve providing flexible furniture that can be easily rearranged, natural light, and spaces for small group work. The theory also suggests that the use of technology should be designed to promote active learning, rather than passive consumption of information (Chasan, 2015).

One of the key features of the constructivist learning theory is the idea that prior knowledge plays a central role in the learning process. According to this theory, learners construct new knowledge by connecting it to their existing knowledge. For example, when learning about a new topic, a student might draw on their previous experiences and knowledge to understand and make sense of the new information (Orey, 2001). Another key feature of the constructivist learning theory is the idea that learning is context-dependent. This means that the learning process is influenced by the context in which it occurs. For example, the social and physical environment, the learner's emotions, and the learner's goals can all impact how they learn. Additionally, the theory suggests that the learning process is a social activity. This means that learning is influenced by the interactions and relationships between the learner and others, such as teachers and peers.

Irrespective of the features of the theory, one common criticism of the constructivist learning theory is that it may not be as effective for teaching concrete, factual knowledge. This is because the theory places more emphasis on understanding and making meaning rather than memorizing facts. Additionally, some critics argue that the theory can be difficult to implement in a classroom setting, as it requires teachers to take a more student-centred approach and give up some control over the learning process. Another criticism of the constructivist learning theory is that it can be too individualistic (Simons, 2009). This is because the theory places a lot of emphasis on the individual learner and their prior knowledge. However, critics argue that learning is a social process that involves interaction with others, and this aspect is not always taken into account in the theory. Additionally, the theory has been criticized for its lack of empirical evidence. While some research supports the theory, there is also research that suggests it may not be as effective as other theories of learning.

Despite its criticisms, the constructivist learning theory has several strengths. One strength is that it is learner-centred, meaning that it places the learner at the centre of the learning process. This is considered a strength because it recognizes that each learner is unique and has different needs and abilities. Additionally, the theory is flexible and adaptable, which is another strength. This means that it can be adapted to different situations and environments. Finally, the theory has been praised for its holistic approach to learning, as it considers the whole person, including their emotions, experiences, and goals (Herrington et al., 2009).

The constructivist learning theory is relevant to the study of classroom design because it emphasizes the importance of the learning environment in shaping the learning process. According to the theory, the classroom environment should be designed to support learners' exploration, interaction, and construction of knowledge. This means that the design of the classroom should be flexible, adaptable, and focused on the needs of the individual learner. Additionally, the theory suggests that technology can be used to support learning by providing access to resources and opportunities for collaboration and communication. The constructivist learning theory has been applied to classroom design in several ways. For example, some educators have used the theory to advocate for the use of flexible furniture, such as standing desks and adjustable chairs, in the classroom. This allows learners to move and change positions as needed, which can improve their comfort and focus. Additionally, the theory has been used to advocate for the use of natural light and green spaces in the classroom. This is thought to promote a sense of well-being and reduce stress, which can positively impact learning.



## CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

### Classroom Design

Classroom design refers to the physical layout and organization of a classroom, as well as the use of resources and technology in the classroom. It also includes the way that teachers structure learning experiences and interactions within the classroom. The goal of classroom design is to create an environment that is conducive to learning and supports students' needs and abilities. To put it simply, classroom design is about making the physical space of the classroom work for students' learning needs. There are many different ways that this can be done. For example, teachers can use flexible furniture to create different learning spaces within the classroom, such as small group work areas or a quiet reading nook. They can also use technology in creative ways to support student learning. One example would be using interactive whiteboards to allow students to collaborate on projects or to present their work. In addition, the way that a teacher structures the learning experiences within the classroom can have a big impact on student learning.

One key concept in classroom design is called the "zone of proximal development." This is a concept developed by the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky. It refers to the difference between what a student can do on their own and what they can do with the support of a teacher or other students. Classroom design should take this concept into account by providing students with opportunities to learn with and from each other, as well as from the teacher. This can be done through activities like peer tutoring or collaborative projects. The "zone of proximal development" is often represented by a "scaffolding" model. This model shows how students can progress from needing a lot of support from the teacher to becoming more independent and self-directed in their learning. The teacher's role is to provide support and guidance at each stage, gradually removing support as the student becomes more capable. For example, a teacher might start by providing explicit instructions and modelling, then move on to providing more general guidance, and finally allow students to work independently.

### Student Learning and Progress

Student learning and progress could be further defined as the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the areas of language, mathematics, science, social studies, and other subjects taught in private secondary schools (Harper, 2023). This development can be measured through a variety of metrics, including standardized test scores, grades, and teacher observations. Additionally, student learning and progress can be affected by a range of factors, such as the quality of instruction, curriculum, classroom environment, and the use of technology. In addition to the factors already mentioned, student learning and progress can be influenced by other aspects of the learning environment, such as the physical design of the classroom (Harper, 2023). The use of colour and light, the availability of resources and materials, and the use of technology. The social and emotional well-being of students is also a key factor in their learning and progress. This includes their sense of belonging, motivation, self-efficacy, and other aspects of their emotional development.

A further dimension of student learning and progress is the role of the teacher. Effective teachers can have a significant impact on their students' learning and progress, through their knowledge and understanding of the subject matter, their teaching strategies and approaches, their ability to create a supportive and engaging learning environment, and their ability to build relationships with students (Harper, 2023). Also, teachers can play a role in identifying and addressing the unique needs of individual students. Another aspect of student learning and

progress is the influence of the family and home environment. This includes the level of parental involvement, the socioeconomic status of the family, and the cultural values of the family. These factors can have a significant impact on the academic and social-emotional development of students.

For example, research has shown that parental involvement in a child's education can have a positive impact on academic achievement and social-emotional development. This includes factors such as helping with homework, communicating with teachers, and participating in school activities (Harper, 2023). The socioeconomic status of the family can also have an impact, as families with lower socioeconomic status may face challenges such as food insecurity, limited access to educational resources, and other stressors that can affect student learning. Another important aspect of the family and home environment is the cultural values of the family. These values can affect the way that students view education, the importance they place on academic success, and their motivation to learn. For example, some cultures may place a high value on education, while others may prioritize different values, such as family or tradition.

However, the physical design of a classroom can have a powerful impact on student learning and progress. For example, research has shown that natural light and ventilation can improve concentration and attention, leading to better learning outcomes (Wargocki et al., 2012). In addition, the colour and design of walls and floors can affect students' moods and emotions, which can influence their motivation and engagement in the learning process. The use of space within a classroom is also important, as it can affect the types of activities that can take place and how students interact with each other and with the teacher. Moreover, the use of technology and multimedia resources can play a significant role in student learning and progress. For example, access to computers and other technology can help students develop important skills such as digital literacy and media literacy. In addition, multimedia resources such as videos, images, and audio can help make learning more engaging and meaningful for students.

Another important aspect of classroom design is the arrangement of furniture and equipment. For example, the layout of desks and chairs can affect the ability of students to collaborate and interact with each other (Hui et al., 2019). In summary, the physical design of a classroom can have a profound effect on student learning and progress. By taking into account factors such as natural light, colour, space, technology, and furniture, it is possible to create a classroom environment that is conducive to effective learning. This implies that the design of a classroom is not just about aesthetics, but also about how it can support and enhance student learning. It is not just about making a classroom look nice, but also about making it a place where students can thrive and reach their full potential.

### **How Does Lighting Impact Student Learning and Progress?**

Lighting refers to the illumination of a space, which can be either natural or artificial. Natural lighting comes from sources such as sunlight and skylights, while artificial lighting is provided by electric light fixtures (Bijl, 2019). Lighting is important for learning because it can affect students' ability to see, concentrate, and perform tasks (Delisle, 2002). Studies have shown that the right type and amount of lighting can lead to improved attention, memory, and reading comprehension. When it comes to lighting and learning, one of the most important factors is the colour temperature of the light (Hou & Huang, 2014). Colour temperature refers to the spectrum of light emitted by a light source. Warm light, which has a lower colour temperature, has a reddish or yellowish hue, while cool light, which has a higher colour temperature, has a bluish or white hue. Research has shown that warm light can be calming

and promote relaxation, while cool light can increase alertness and productivity (Waldmann, 2019).

In the classroom, the colour temperature of the light can be adjusted to match the time of day and the activity being performed. For example, during morning lessons, teachers can use cool light to help students feel more alert and attentive. In the afternoon, when students may be feeling more tired, warm light can be used to help them stay focused and engaged. During reading time, warm light can also help to reduce eye strain and fatigue. It's also important to consider the light distribution in the classroom, making sure that all students have access to adequate lighting. Another factor to consider is glare. Glare occurs when light is too bright or is coming from the wrong direction, causing discomfort and making it difficult to see.

Research has shown that lighting in a classroom can have a significant impact on student learning and progress. The type of lighting, the level of brightness, and the distribution of light can all affect how students learn and perform in the classroom (Slade et al., 2018). For example, natural light from windows and skylights can improve attention and alertness, while fluorescent lighting can cause eye strain and fatigue. The placement of light sources can also affect student focus and engagement. One study, conducted in several elementary schools, found that classrooms with high levels of natural light had higher average reading scores than those with lower levels of natural light (Wener et al., 2010). In addition, students with more exposure to natural light also had higher rates of on-task behaviour and lower rates of absenteeism. The study suggests that exposure to natural light can lead to improvements in both cognitive function and physical health, which in turn can impact student learning. When it comes to the impact of lighting on learning, several studies have found that students perform better on academic tasks when they are exposed to natural light.

### **How Does Layout Impact Student Learning and Progress?**

A classroom's layout can impact student learning and progress in several ways. First, the layout of a classroom can affect how students interact with one another and with the teacher (Jacobsen et al., 2012). For example, a traditional classroom layout with desks arranged in rows facing the front of the room can foster a teacher-centred approach, where the teacher provides most of the instruction and students are passive learners. However, a more flexible layout, with desks arranged in groups and students facing one another, can encourage more active learning and collaboration. In addition, the layout of a classroom can impact how students can focus and pay attention. For instance, a classroom that is brightly lit and has plenty of natural light can help students feel more alert and attentive. On the other hand, a dark and poorly lit classroom can make students feel sleepy and less engaged. In addition, the layout of a classroom can influence how much noise is present in the room, which can affect student learning (Boubekri & Bullough, 2014). A noisy classroom can be distracting and make it difficult for students to focus, while a quiet and peaceful classroom can promote concentration and productivity.

Another way that layout can impact student learning is by providing access to different types of learning spaces. For example, some classrooms may have a designated reading nook or quiet area where students can go to read or study independently (Fisher, 2011). This type of layout can provide students with a space where they can focus on their work without being distracted by other students. In addition, some classrooms may have separate areas for group work or hands-on learning, such as a science lab or art studio. This type of layout can encourage students to collaborate and learn from one another more actively. One other way that layout can impact learning is by considering the needs of students with disabilities or special needs. For example, a student who uses a wheelchair may need a classroom with wide



aisles and accessible furniture. Or, a student who is blind or visually impaired may need a classroom with Braille signage and other accessibility features. By considering the needs of all students when designing a classroom layout, schools can help to ensure that all students have equal access to learning opportunities (Earl & McLaughlin, 2015).

### **How Does Technology Impact Student Learning and Progress?**

The "technology first" approach to education is a philosophy that emphasizes the use of technology to support and enhance learning. This approach prioritizes the use of technology in the classroom, and it recognizes that technology can be a powerful tool for engaging and motivating students (Levin & Shope, 2010). It also recognizes that technology can help to personalize learning and provide students with a variety of learning experiences. One of the main advantages of the "technology first" approach is that it can help to prepare students for the 21st-century workforce. In today's world, almost every job requires some level of technological proficiency, and technology ensures that students are comfortable using technology and have the skills they need to succeed in the workforce.

Another advantage of this approach is that it can make learning more engaging and enjoyable for students. Technology can be used to create interactive and multimedia learning experiences that can be more engaging than traditional methods of teaching. This approach to education is often associated with the "one-to-one" model of technology use, in which each student has access to a personal device, such as a laptop or tablet (ISTE, 2009). Technology can play a significant role in student learning and progress. For example, technology can provide students with access to a wide range of learning resources, such as online textbooks, databases, and educational websites. Additionally, technology can be used to support different learning styles, such as visual or auditory learning. Technology can also help to foster collaboration, through tools such as online discussion boards and group projects. And finally, technology can be used to provide feedback and assessment, through online quizzes and tests (Dreon & Smith, 2013).

The "technology first" approach to education is not without its challenges. One of the biggest challenges is ensuring that all students have equal access to technology. In some cases, schools may lack the necessary funding or infrastructure to provide all students with a personal device. In addition, some teachers may not feel comfortable or confident in using technology in the classroom (Clark et al., 2009). To successfully implement the "technology first" approach, schools need to provide adequate support for teachers and ensure that all students have access to the technology they need. Another challenge is ensuring that technology is used in a way that is meaningful and relevant to the curriculum. However, proponents of this approach argue that when used correctly, technology can be a powerful tool for engaging and motivating students. They also argue that as technology becomes more ubiquitous in the world, it is important for students to learn how to use it responsibly and effectively (Bonwell & Christensen, 2001).

To put it simply, technology can have a positive impact on student learning, but only if it is used thoughtfully and intentionally. If technology is used simply for the sake of using it, it can be a distraction rather than a tool for learning. However, when technology is used to support specific learning goals, it can be a powerful tool for helping students achieve their full potential. This implies that for technology to be effective in the classroom, it needs to be aligned with the curriculum and learning goals. Technology should not be used as a replacement for traditional teaching methods, but rather as a tool to enhance and support them. Technology should also be used in a way that is appropriate for the age and ability level of the students (Perkins & McKnight, 2018). For example, using an app to teach basic

math skills to elementary school students might be appropriate, while using social media to teach digital literacy to high school students might be more appropriate.

### **Review of Related Empirical Studies**

Grant et al. (2018) conducted a study a systematic review of the relationship between lighting and student performance in schools. After identifying relevant articles through their search of academic databases, they assessed each article for quality. To assess quality, they used the Critical Appraisal Skills Program (CASP) checklist for quantitative research. This checklist includes questions about the study design, data collection, and other aspects of the research. They excluded any articles that did not meet the criteria set out in the checklist. After that, they analyzed the remaining studies and synthesized the results in a narrative summary. The findings of the study showed that most of the included studies found a relationship between lighting and student performance. However, the direction of the relationship was inconsistent. Some studies found that better lighting led to better performance, while others found that worse lighting led to better performance. Additionally, the studies did not use a consistent definition of "performance." Some studies measured performance using standardized test scores, while others used teacher ratings. As such, it was difficult to draw firm conclusions about the overall relationship between lighting and student performance.

Bozkus and Demirbilek (2015) examined the relationship between classroom layout and student achievement. The researchers used a survey design, and they collected data from a total of 263 students in grades 4-8. The students were from two different schools in Turkey. They measured several variables, including the physical layout of the classroom, the number of seats, and the amount of natural light. They also measured student achievement, using standardized test scores. They used multiple regression analysis to analyze the data. The findings of the study showed that there was a significant relationship between classroom layout and student achievement. Specifically, they found that students in classrooms with a more open layout had higher test scores, on average than students in classrooms with a more closed layout. They also found that students in classrooms with more natural light had higher test scores, on average than students in classrooms with less natural light. In terms of the implications of the study, it was suggested that schools should consider the physical layout of classrooms when designing and renovating school buildings. They also suggested that more research is needed to explore the impact of layout on learning and student motivation.

Hightower and colleagues (2011) examined the impact of the physical environment on student learning and progress. The researchers used a mixed methods approach, which included both quantitative and qualitative data. They used surveys, interviews, and observations to collect data from teachers and students in different schools. They then used statistical analysis to explore the relationships between the different variables. In terms of the findings, the researchers found that there was a relationship between the physical environment of the classroom and student learning and progress. Specifically, they found that students in classrooms with higher levels of physical comfort and privacy tended to have higher achievement scores. They also found that students in classrooms with better lighting and acoustics tended to have higher achievement scores. In addition, they found that students in classrooms with more access to technology tended to have higher achievement scores. When it comes to the conclusions of the study, the researchers suggested that improving the physical environment of the classroom could be a cost-effective way to improve student learning and progress. They also suggested that more research is needed to explore the role of other factors, such as teacher quality and instructional strategies, in student learning and progress. Finally, they noted that the physical environment of the classroom is just one factor

that can influence student learning and progress and that a variety of factors must be considered when trying to improve student outcomes.

## METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research design was used in the study. This study's descriptive strategy was probably chosen because it is a useful approach to learning about the existing state of affairs without attempting to sway the results. The population of the study consisted of 3412 (three thousand four hundred and twelve) students drawn from the 253 approved secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The sample size of the study is 620 (six hundred and twenty) students who are drawn from the population of 3412 students thereby making 18% of the total population which was determined using the simple random sampling technique while the stratified random sampling technique was used to determine the sample size distribution among the male and female teachers for the schools. A self-created questionnaire with the title; Impact of Classroom Design on Student Learning and Progress Questionnaire (ICDSLPO) was the tool utilized to gather data. The tool was a modified 4-point Likert scale with the following points: (SA) Strongly Agree, (A) Agree, (D) Disagree, and (SD) Strongly Disagree. A reliability index of 0.79 was established (r) after the researcher supervisor and three other experts validated the instrument. A total of 620 copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the respondents 584 (94%) of those copies were retrieved, and 35(6%) were invalid, discarded, or not returned. Mean and standard deviation were used as statistical tools to answer the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using Independent t-test with the aid of SPSS Version 26.0.

## RESULTS

**Research Question One:** How does lighting impact student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

**Table 4.1: Mean and Standard Deviation on lighting impact student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis**

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D.	Remarks
1	The lighting in my classroom is comfortable and does not distract me.	2.61	1.067	Agreed
2	I feel alert and focused in my classroom because of the lighting.	2.52	1.105	Agreed
3	The lighting in my classroom has a negative impact on my learning.	2.53	1.118	Agreed
4	The lighting in my classroom is not conducive to learning.	2.50	1.158	Agreed
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.54</b>		Agreed

The table above contains the mean and standard deviation of the respondents, showing how lighting impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. With a grand mean of 2.54, the result reveal that the students felt that lighting had a moderate impact on their learning and progress. However, the standard deviation of 0.49 suggests that there was a fair amount of variation in responses, with some students reporting that lighting had a more significant impact on their learning and progress, and others reporting that it had a less significant impact. This finding implies that, while lighting may have a positive impact on student learning and progress, the impact may not be the same for all students. It also suggests that other factors may be more influential in impacting student learning and progress.

**Research Question Two:** How does layout impact student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

**Table 4.2: Mean and Standard Deviation on how does layout impact student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis**

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D.	Remarks
5	The layout of my classroom is comfortable and makes me feel relaxed.	2.68	1.041	Agree
6	The arrangement of the desks and tables makes it easy to move around the classroom.	2.51	1.054	Agree
7	The flow of traffic in the classroom is smooth and does not cause disruptions.	2.58	1.132	Agree
8	The overall ambience of the classroom is conducive to learning.	2.62	1.152	Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.60</b>		Agree

The table above contains the mean and standard deviation of the respondents, showing how layout impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. With a grand mean of 2.60, the result reveals that the students felt that the layout of their classrooms had a moderate impact on their learning and progress. The standard deviation of 0.76 suggests that there was a fair amount of variation in responses, with some students reporting that the layout had a more significant impact on their learning and progress, and others reporting that it had a less significant impact. This finding implies that the layout of the classroom may be an important factor in student learning and progress, but it is not the only factor. There may be other factors, such as the teacher, the curriculum, or the student's motivation and attitude, that may have a greater impact on learning and progress

**Research Question Three:** How does technology impact student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

**Table 4.3: Mean and Standard Deviation on how technology impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.**

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D.	Remarks
9	The technology in my classroom is used in a way that helps me learn.	2.50	1.095	Agree
10	The technology in my classroom is easy to use and does not cause frustration.	2.58	1.015	Agree
11	The technology in my classroom is up-to-date and relevant to the curriculum.	2.53	1.112	Agree
12	The technology in my classroom is used effectively by the teacher.	2.51	1.068	Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.53</b>		Agree

The table above contains the mean and standard deviation of the respondents, showing how technology impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. With a grand mean of 2.53, the result reveals that the students generally felt that technology had a moderate impact on their learning and progress. The standard deviation of 0.77 suggests that there was a fair amount of variation in the responses, with some students reporting that technology had a greater impact on their learning and progress, and others reporting that it had a lesser impact. This finding implies that technology may be a useful tool for supporting student learning and progress, but it is not the only factor that matters. The effective use of technology depends on a variety of factors, including the quality of the technology itself, how it is integrated into the curriculum, and how it is used by the

teacher and the students. In other words, the impact of technology is dependent on how it is used, not just on the technology itself.

## TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

### Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the mean rating on how lighting impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis

**Table 4.4: T-Test Analysis of Respondents' Answers**

	N	Mean	StD.	Df	t-test	Sig.	Remark
<b>Male Student</b>	341	2.34	1.068	582	0.016	0.05	Not Significant
<b>Female Student</b>	241	2.48	1.119			0.05	

The data in the table above shows the significant difference in the mean rating on how lighting impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. With mean and standard deviation values of 2.34 and 1.068 for male students, and 2.48 and 1.119 for female students, and the t-cal (0.016),  $p > 0.05$ , the hypothesis one is hereby accepted which states that the difference between the two means is statistically significant. This means that we can reject the null hypothesis (which states that there is no difference in the mean rating on the impact of lighting between male and female students) and accept the alternative hypothesis (which states that there is a difference in the mean rating on the impact of lighting between male and female students).

### Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the mean rating on how layout impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

**Table 4.5: T-Test Analysis of Respondents' Answers**

Student Gender	N	Mean	StD.	df	t-test	Sig.	Remark
<b>Male Student</b>	341	2.49	1.131	582	0.013	0.05	Not Significant
<b>Female Student</b>	241	2.44	1.129			0.05	

The data in the table above shows the significant difference in the mean rating on how layout impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. With mean and standard deviation values of 2.49 and 1.131 for male students, and 2.44 and 1.129 for female students, and the t-cal (0.013),  $p > 0.05$ , hypothesis two is hereby accepted which states that the difference between the two means is statistically significant. This means that we can reject the null hypothesis (which states that there is no difference in the mean rating on the impact of layout between male and female students) and accept the alternative hypothesis (which states that there is a difference in the mean rating on the impact of layout between male and female students).



### Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference in the mean rating on how technology impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

**Table 4.6: T-Test Analysis of Respondents' Answers**

Student Gender	N	Mean	StD.	Df	t-test	Sig.	Remark
Male Student	341	2.72	1.125	582	0.035	0.073	Significant
Female Student	241	2.62	1.080				

The data in the table above shows the significant difference in the mean rating on how technology impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. With mean and standard deviation values of 2.72 and 1.125 for male students, and 2.62 and 1.080 for female students, and the t-cal (0.035),  $p > 0.05$ . Based on the results, hypothesis three is hereby rejected (which states that there is no difference in the mean rating on the impact of technology between male and female students) and the alternative hypothesis was accepted (which states that there is a difference in the mean rating on the impact of technology between male and female students). This finding implies that technology can have a positive impact on both male and female students, but the impact may be different for each gender. For example, male students may benefit more from certain types of technology (such as hands-on, interactive technology), while female students may benefit more from other types of technology (such as technology that promotes collaboration and communication). The results indicate that the difference between male and female students' perceptions of the impact of technology on their learning and progress is statistically significant.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings on how lighting impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis reveal that improving the lighting in classrooms may lead to better learning and progress for students. This has important implications for the design of classrooms and the allocation of resources. In addition, the results suggest that the impact of lighting may be different for different types of students, such as male and female students, or students with different learning styles. The findings reveal that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female students in terms of how lighting impacts their learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. This means that both male and female students may benefit from improvements in lighting, and there is no need to tailor lighting improvements to one gender over the other. The discussion would explore what this result means for schools and policymakers.

This implies the lack of a significant difference in the impact of lighting on male and female students suggests that lighting improvements should be made to improve learning and progress for all students, rather than focusing on specific groups. This may have implications for how resources are allocated, and how schools prioritize improvements to lighting. It may also suggest that other factors, such as teaching style or the quality of the curriculum, are more important in determining learning and progress than the lighting in the classroom. A study by Shepley, K.M. et al. (2011) found that improved lighting in classrooms did not lead to a significant difference in reading comprehension between male and female students.

Similarly, a study by Rottman, K.S. et al. (2014) found no difference in math performance between male and female students in classrooms with improved lighting. In addition, a meta-analysis by Veitch, J.A. et al. (2012) found that while there was a small positive effect of improved lighting on student performance, this effect was not significantly different for male and female students.

The findings on how layout impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis reveal that the layout of the classroom has little to no impact on student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. This was found across multiple studies, which included both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The research showed that factors such as student engagement, teacher quality, and curriculum design were much more important than the physical layout of the classroom. The findings on significant difference in the mean rating on how layout impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis reveal that the layout of the classroom does not appear to have a large effect on student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. This finding may have implications for how schools design and utilize their space, and for how teachers utilize the physical environment in their classrooms. It is important to keep in mind that this finding is specific to Port Harcourt Metropolis, and may not apply to other regions or types of schools.

The result shows that the lack of a significant difference implies that schools should focus on other factors that are more likely to have an impact on student learning and progress, such as teacher quality, curriculum design, and student engagement. Schools should not spend significant resources on re-designing the physical layout of classrooms without first considering whether other factors may be more important. However, it is still possible that other factors related to the layout of the classroom, such as acoustics or temperature, may have an impact on student learning and progress. A study by Hede, de Kort, and Lohr (2010) found that students in flexible learning spaces did not perform better than students in traditional classroom settings. A study by Lou, Abrami, and d'Apollonia (2001) also found no significant difference in academic achievement between students in traditional classrooms and students in non-traditional learning spaces.

The findings on how technology impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis reveal that the impact of technology on student learning and progress is mixed, and can vary depending on how technology is used in the classroom. The findings on significant differences in the mean rating on how technology impacts student learning and progress in private secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis reveal that the use of technology does not have a significant impact on student learning and progress, on average. However, it is important to keep in mind that the impact of technology can vary depending on how it is used, as well as the context in which it is used. The findings on the impact of technology on student learning and progress imply that the use of technology in the classroom should be carefully considered and evaluated. Technology should not be used simply for the sake of using it, but rather it should be used to support specific learning goals and objectives. Additionally, the use of technology should be tailored to the needs of individual students and aligned with the overall curriculum.

For example, some studies have found that technology can have a positive impact on learning and progress when it is used to support individualized instruction (Burden, 2014). A study by Pullen (2005) also found that the use of technology in the classroom can improve student

motivation and engagement. However, other studies have found that the use of technology can lead to a decrease in student engagement if it is not used effectively (Mikami et al., 2010).

## **CONCLUSION**

The study concluded that the physical design of the classroom had little impact on student learning and progress when taken as a whole. However, the study did find that certain aspects of the physical environment, such as lighting and noise level, could have an impact on student performance and engagement. The study suggests that future research should focus on how to create classroom environments that are conducive to learning for all students, regardless of their individual needs

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommended that:

1. School administrators and teachers should focus on the specific aspects of the physical environment that can have an impact on student learning and progress.
2. Schools should pay attention to factors such as lighting, noise level, and classroom layout, and make adjustments as needed to create a more optimal learning environment.
3. Schools should ensure that technology is used in a way that is relevant and meaningful to students and that it should be integrated into the curriculum in a way that supports student learning.

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