

Appraising the Roles of Head Teachers in Maintenance of Classroom Physical Facilities in Osun State Primary Schools, Nigeria

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Abstract

Head teachers' roles are indispensable in managing and maintaining classroom physical facilities. Maintenance of available classroom physical facilities is very significant in every school. This paper examined the roles of head teachers in maintaining classroom physical facilities in Osun State primary schools. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The study population consisted of all 9,870 teachers in Osun State primary schools. The sample comprised 385 teachers who were selected using simple random sampling techniques. Appraising the roles of Head Teachers' Maintenance of Classroom Facilities Questionnaire (AHMCFQ) was the instrument used for data collection. Data were analyzed descriptively. The results showed that the present condition of the classrooms environment was conducive for pupils to learn ($M = 3.23$), the aesthetic of the classrooms environment encouraged the pupils to come to school ($M = 3.13$), each of the pupils has comfortable chair and table in their various classes ($M = 3.18$) and the classrooms were located in an area that saved from dangers ($M = 3.30$). The findings equally showed that the head teachers in Osun State primary schools ensured that the classrooms' surroundings were neat and clean daily ($M = 3.61$ through assigning teachers to supervise the cleanliness of the classrooms in their section ($M = 3.43$)), inspected the classrooms facilities daily to ascertain their condition ($M = 3.39$) maintained classrooms surroundings by planting flowers and trees to provide shades ($M = 2.87$) and replaced worn out classrooms facilities using internally generated revenue ($M = 2.70$). However, the study further regarded financial constraints ($M = 2.83$) and misuse of the facilities by pupils ($M = 2.52$) as challenges encountered by head teachers in maintaining available physical facilities in Osun State primary schools. The study concluded that the head teachers significantly contributed to improving the present condition of classroom physical facilities. The findings implicate that the head teachers should accept the maintenance of classroom physical facilities as their responsibility and they should devise skills to make it in good shape to use.

Keywords: head teachers roles, maintenance, primary school, Nigeria

Introduction

The role of education across countries cannot be overemphasized because it is regarded as the most powerful weapon that can be used to transform any country. That is why it is essential in any country to show serious concern for the educational background of their young ones for proper and sound foundations. The foundations of children's education are widely accepted as the most important period during which children's cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains are developed, which ultimately is needed for their future achievements. Many researchers suggest that pupils' success in schools and other aspects of their life will improve considerably when quality educational experiences are delivered in their early years (Melhuish & Petrogiannis, 2006; Whitebread, 2008; Yelland, 2010). This connotes that the foundation of pupils' education is regarded as the root of further knowledge to be built.

Primary school education is regarded as the foundation for children to develop their higher academic exercises. According to the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) (2014), primary education is regarded as education that is given to children aged

between the ranges of 6-12 years. FGN (2014) further highlighted the objectives of primary education as to inculcate permanent literary, numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively; and also set a sound basis for scientific, critical and reflective thinking, which will stand to promote patriotism, fairness, understanding and national unity; thereby instilling social, moral norms and values in the child; develop in the child ability to adapt to the changing environment; and provide opportunities for the development of the child to have the needed skills that would make the child to function and live effectively in the community within the limits of the child's capacity. It can be believed and affirmed that these objectives are measured and achieved when the pupils have excellent academic performance, good behavior and transition into the secondary level of education. In considering the achievement of the objective through pupils' achievement in schools, the ingredients to make it actualize-able, that is, the classrooms' physical facilities, cannot be over-emphasized.

Studies have revealed the importance of school facilities to pupils' academic achievement. Oyedeji (as cited in Adesina, 1980), reported that the quality of education received by pupils in schools indicates the relevance of the classroom physical facilities

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in the school and the atmosphere where Teaching and learning occur. Moreso, it was observed that adequate provision of classroom physical facilities has a positive relevance to pupils' academic achievement (Hamdallah et al., 2013). Schneider (2003) disclosed that clean, quiet, safe, comfortable, and healthy environments are important components for successful Teaching and learning. Sani (2007) reported significant benefits of classroom facilities' maintenance to pupils' academic performance. These attestations from the above research infer that physical classroom facilities enhance the comfort and safety of pupils and improve teaching-learning activities across Nigeria, including Osun State.

However, Allen (2015) reported that management of school facilities through maintenance in schools had not been achieved and as a result of that, schools have failed to achieve their intended objectives nowadays because facilities are not serviced or repaired promptly until they become worst or broken down in Nigeria. This could be why most of the physical facilities, especially the classrooms in the primary schools, were so dilapidated beyond control in Nigeria. In this regard, Asiyai (2012) lamented that school administrators do not manage school facilities and that the administrators appear to spend much time on instructional planning, curriculum development, personnel development and community relations, claiming that the management and maintenance of school facilities are the sole preserves of the government. The study of Asiyai affirmed that the school heads were not paying attention to the maintenance and disregarded it as their responsibility. In the same vein, Ogie (2015), in his study, reported that school heads were paying less attention to the maintenance of their school facilities. From the above empirical reports, it could be believed that it is part of the responsibility of the head teachers to ensure maintenance of the available school physical facilities, most especially of that classroom facilities. However, not many of research has been conducted in this direction in Public primary schools in Osun State.

Review of the Related Literature

The classrooms are regarded as the most facility that accommodates and use by pupils and it is commonly and frequently used for teaching learning activities. Success in the classroom is linked to regular school attendance, and attendance depends on how conducive the classroom environment is. Aesthetics of the classroom environment, such as beautiful surroundings, internet access and provision of air conditioners or ceiling fans, can motivate pupils to attend school regularly (Udosen, 2012). Unfortunately, the lack of maintenance culture in school facilities is a major problem that bedevils education in Nigeria (Amanchukwu & Olube, 2015; Uko et al., 2015). Broken chairs, doors, windows, dirty toilets, dilapidated classroom buildings, and broken down and unfixed equipment are common sights in primary schools. According to Hakielimu (2010), the issue of poor maintenance of classroom facilities took root a long time ago. It can be traced back to when formal education was introduced to primary schools in the world. The mismanagement of physical facilities like classrooms has been increasing due to the increase of old buildings that pupils do not properly use. The main cause has been a lack of maintenance and lack of total care of established infrastructure; many pupils in the world in primary schools, such as in Ghana, Zambia, etc., have no classes, but old buildings exist (Schneider, 2012). Even the countries with new buildings through government intervention are not keeping their physical facilities in good shape. Authors such as Otu (2002) and Asiegbu (2014) acknowledged that classroom physical facilities at all levels of education are poorly maintained. The poor state of classroom facilities in public schools and equipment disrepair are due to inadequate maintenance culture (Asiyai, 2012). Allen (2015) revealed that management of school classroom facilities through maintenance in secondary schools had not been achieved, and as a result, schools have failed to achieve their intended objectives nowadays because facilities are not serviced or repaired promptly until they become worse or broken down in Nigeria.

Meanwhile, the school head is seen as the person in charge of managing the available facilities. Therefore, head teachers must

keep their schools' available classrooms and physical facilities in good shape. However, the literature claimed that the head teachers did not perform their duties in this direction. Therefore, this calls to appraise the roles of head teachers in maintaining available classroom physical facilities in Osun State public primary schools.

Objectives

1. Investigate the present conditions of available classroom physical facilities in Osun State primary schools.
2. Examine the significant roles of the head teachers in maintaining classroom physical facilities in Osun State primary schools.
3. Examine head teachers' challenges in maintaining available classroom physical facilities in Osun State primary schools.

Research Questions

1. What is the present condition of available classroom physical facilities in Osun State primary schools?
2. What are the significant roles of the head teachers in maintaining classroom physical facilities in Osun State primary schools?
3. What challenges do head teachers encounter in maintaining available classroom physical facilities in Osun State primary schools?

Methodology

Design

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The design was appropriate for the study because the research data collected were in the form of numbers. Data were collected from only a few people considered representative of the entire group on which the analysis was based upon.

Participants

The population for the study consisted of all 9,870 teachers in Osun State primary schools. The sample comprised 385 teachers using Taro Yamane's formula to determine the sample size. Taro Yamane's formula is $n = N / [1 + (Ne^2)]$ (where, n = Sample size N = Total population, e = .05 (constant)) (Yamane, 1967). A simple random sampling technique was used to select seven Local Government Areas (LGAs) from the thirty LGAs in Osun State. From each LGA, five primary schools were selected, 11 teachers were selected from each primary school using a simple random sampling technique.

Tools

An instrument was used for the study. The questionnaire was titled: Appraisal of roles of Head Teachers in Maintenance of Classroom Facilities Questionnaire (AHMCFQ). AHMCFQ was self-designed. It was used to gather relevant information from the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section A gathered information on respondents' profiles. Section B contained eleven items that collected information on the condition of available classroom physical facilities, Section C contained eight items that gathered information on the roles of head teachers in the maintenance of classroom facilities, and section D also contained eight items that gathered information on challenges encountered by head teachers for maintaining available classroom physical facilities. For AHMCFQ, a 4-point Likert-type scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 was used. The cut-off point considered as agreed for the responses was 2.50. The basis for arriving at 2.50 was by adding $4+3+2+1 = 10/4 = 2.50$. Thus, the interpretation of the cut-off point of 2.50 was a mean score based on 2.50. Any mean score of 2.50 and above was considered accepted, while a score below 2.50 was considered rejected.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The face and content validity of the instrument was established through an experts review in Educational Management, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. Comments and suggestions were corrected before the questionnaires were administered to respondents. The test re-test method of reliability was used to ascertain the consistency of the questionnaire. This was done by administering an instrument to 39 teachers who were selected outside of the study's sample but within the population within an interval of two weeks. The data collected were analyzed through Cronbach's Alpha reliability and the coefficient was .758. The results on the scale of reliability indicated a highly positive relationship among the respondents.

Table 1
Reliability Test Results

Sections	No of items	Cronbach's alpha	Status
B	11	.76	Reliable
C	8	.75	Reliable
D	8	.75	Reliable
Scale of reliability	27	.75	Reliable

Table 2
Present Conditions of Available Classroom Physical Facilities

Items	M	SD	Decision
The classroom environment is conducive for pupils to learn	3.23	.86	Agree
The aesthetic of the classroom environment encourages the pupils to come to school	3.13	1.10	Agree
The classrooms have windows for good ventilation	3.48	.84	Agree
The classrooms have good doors	3.59	.66	Agree
The roof and ceilings of the classrooms are well covered	3.43	.84	Agree
The classrooms are located in an area that saved from dangers	3.30	.97	Agree
The classrooms have a tidy environment	2.91	1.16	Agree
The classroom environment is not busy	3.22	.79	Agree
The table and chairs are in good shape for learning	3.22	.95	Agree
Classrooms are sufficient to accommodate students in this school	3.39	.83	Agree
Each of the pupils has a comfortable chair and table in the classes	3.18	.91	Agree
Cluster mean	3.02	.89	Agree

Note. N = 385.

Table 2 shows respondents' mean and standard deviations on the present condition of available physical facilities in Osun State primary schools. The result showed that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 had mean rating scores above the criterion level. These mean ratings are above the criterion level of 2.50 set for accepting an item. This means that the present condition of the classroom environment was conducive for pupils to learn, the environment encouraged the pupils to come to school, and the classrooms had good windows and doors. In addition, the roofs and ceilings of the classrooms were in proper shape. The classroom environment was very tidy, the classrooms environment was not busy, tables and chairs were in good shape

Table 3
Roles of Head Teachers in Maintenance of Classroom Facilities

Items	M	SD	Decision
Head-teacher ensures daily cleaning of classroom surroundings	3.61	.49	Agree
Head-teacher inspects the classroom facilities to ascertain their condition daily	3.39	.58	Agree
Head-teacher assigns teachers to supervise the cleanliness of classrooms in their section	3.43	.72	Agree
Head-teacher maintains the classroom environment by planting flowers and trees to provide shade.	2.87	1.01	Agree
Head-teacher replaces worn-out classroom facilities using internally generated revenue	2.70	1.06	Agree
Head-teacher encourages the teachers to treat classroom facilities with respect	3.09	.86	Agree
Head-teacher encourages the students to treat classroom facilities with respect	3.13	.92	Agree
Head-teacher applies to the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) and Philanthropist for the construction of classroom blocks and major repairs and replacement	2.83	.88	Agree
Cluster mean	3.13	.82	Agree

Note. N = 385.

Data Collections Techniques

Each head teacher granted permission in the sampled schools to administer questionnaires to the teachers. The researchers administered the instrument in three weeks. The questionnaire was handed over to individual teachers based on the name and address of the sampled schools. Some teachers reacted to the questionnaire immediately while some were collected later in the day. All the questionnaires administered were retrieved.

Data Analysis Process

The data collected were analyzed descriptively. Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation (SD) were used to answer the research questions. The mean scores were interpreted based on a cut-off point of 2.50. The basis for arriving at 2.50 was by adding $4+3+2+1 = 10/4 = 2.50$. Any mean score 2.50 and above was considered accepted while a mean score below 2.50 was considered rejected.

Results

Research question 1: What is the present condition of available classroom physical facilities in Osun State primary schools?

for learning, classrooms were sufficient to accommodate pupils available in the schools, and each of the pupils had comfortable chairs and tables in their various classes. In addition, the classrooms were located in an area that was saved from danger. The cluster mean of 3.02 with a standard deviation of 0.89 showed that the present condition of available classroom physical facilities in Osun State primary schools was appropriate for teaching-learning activities that could result in better academic performance.

Research question 2: What are the significant roles of the head teachers in maintaining classroom physical facilities in Osun State primary schools?

The result in Table 3 showed respondents' mean and standard deviations on the roles of head teachers in maintaining classroom facilities in Osun State primary schools. The result showed that items 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 had mean rating scores above the criterion level. Since the mean ratings are above the criterion level of 2.50, this means that the head teachers in Osun State primary schools ensured daily cleaning of classroom surroundings, inspected the classrooms facilities to ascertain their condition daily, assigned teachers to supervise the cleanliness of the classrooms in their section, maintained classroom environment by planting flowers, trees to provide shades, replaced worn out classroom facilities using internally

generated revenue, encourages the teachers and students to treat classroom facilities with respect, and applied to the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) and Philanthropist for construction of classroom blocks and major repairs and replacement. The cluster mean of 3.13 with a standard deviation of 0.82 showed that the head teachers discharged their roles in ensuring that all classroom physical facilities were in good and attractive condition for teaching-learning activities that could result in better academic performance.

Research question 3: What challenges do head teachers encounter in maintaining available classroom physical facilities in Osun State primary schools?

Table 4

Challenges Encountered by Head-Teacher in Maintaining Available Classroom Physical Facilities

Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Decision
The uninterested attitude of head-teacher	2.14	1.03	Disagree
The problem of financial constraints for plants maintenance	2.83	.98	Agree
The problem of lack of commitment by teachers as regards school classroom supervision	2.30	.92	Disagree
The problem of termite attack wooden classroom facilities	2.30	.92	Disagree
Lack of maintenance plan for the schools	2.45	1.01	Disagree
Overpopulation of the pupils in the classrooms	1.78	.85	Disagree
The classroom buildings are deteriorating because of age	1.87	.86	Disagree
Mis-use of the classroom facilities by pupils	2.52	1.03	Agree
Cluster mean	2.27	.95	Disagree

Note. *N* = 385.

Table 4 shows respondents' mean and standard deviations on head teachers' challenges maintaining available classroom physical facilities. Results showed that items 21 and 27 had mean rating scores above the criterion level. These mean ratings are above the criterion level of 2.50 set for accepting an item. This means the respondents agreed that head teachers encounter the following challenges in maintaining available classrooms and physical facilities in Osun State primary schools. According to the result, these problems are financial constraints for plant maintenance and pupils misuse of the classroom facilities. However, items 20, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26 had mean rating scores below the criterion level. These mean ratings are below the criterion level of 2.50 set for accepting an item, and this means that the respondents disagreed with the uninterested attitude of head teachers, lack of commitment by teachers as regards school plant supervision, the problem of termite attack on wooden aspect classroom facilities, lack of maintenance plan for the schools, overpopulation of the pupils in the classrooms, and classroom buildings are deteriorating because of age as the challenges encountered by head teachers in maintaining available classroom physical facilities. Government intervention in new buildings and renovation of primary schools and prompt skills applied in proper management of the school's physical facilities could be the reason why the respondents disagree with the following item as the challenges encountered by head teachers in maintaining available classrooms' physical facilities.

Discussion

The results of the study showed that the present conditions of Osun State primary schools were conducive for pupils to learn as the aesthetic of the classroom environment encouraged the pupils to come to school. The study also showed that the classrooms of the study area have good windows, doors, roofs and ceilings. Equally, the classroom environment was tidy and not busy. The table and chairs of the classroom in the study area were in good shape for each of the pupils to learn and the classrooms were located in an area that saved them from danger. This indicates that the present conditions of available classroom physical facilities in Osun State primary schools were appropriate for teaching-learning activities that would result in better academic performance. These findings opposed the findings of Alimi et al. (2011), who emphasized the pathetic situation of inadequate instructional space, such as classrooms having been structurally defective, that is, classrooms were not spacious enough.

The study showed that head teachers ensured that they inspected the classroom surroundings daily and assigned teachers to supervise the cleanliness of the classrooms in their section. In addition, they planted flowers and trees to provide shade in the classroom environment. Meanwhile, most worn-out classroom facilities were replaced with internally generated revenue. Equally, head teachers always encouraged the teachers and students to treat classroom facilities respectfully and seek assistance from parents and philanthropists to construct classroom blocks and major school repairs and replacements. In consonance with this finding, Wakaham (2003) reported that the school heads were responsible for the maintenance activities and repair and raising funds for maintenance activities. However, the findings dissented from the findings of Asiegbu (2014) and Otu (2002), who reported that school plants at all levels of education were poorly maintained. The finding also negated the report of Ogie (2015) in his study, who revealed that the school head pays less attention to the management of school facilities. The study also disagreed with the Asiyai (2012) study, which reported that school administrators do not manage school facilities. It proved in the study that the head teachers in Osun State primary schools performed their roles in properly maintaining available classroom physical facilities.

However, the study further indicated that the challenges facing the head teachers in the study area were financial constraints and pupils' misuse of the classroom facilities. The finding concurred with those who opined that the factor affecting the maintenance of facilities was the lack of adequate funding for purchasing maintenance tools. The study also agreed with Asiyai's (2012) findings, which reported that inadequate funds allocated and disbursed to schools have not allowed for proper maintenance of available facilities. This study corroborates Alonsabe (2011), who affirmed that the poor position of most school plants, especially classroom facilities, can be traced to the fact that federal and state governments make no budgetary provisions for school plant maintenance.

Conclusion

The head teachers' roles cannot be over-emphasized in properly managing and maintaining the classroom's physical facilities. The classroom physical facilities are instruments to achieve the educational objective. That is why every head teacher of primary schools must devise different means to enable the classroom physical facilities to be in good condition and usable. Therefore, head teachers of primary schools of Osun State,

including other schools in Nigeria, are expected to know that maintenance of physical facilities is their responsibility; therefore, they need to develop the necessary ways to enable them to keep the physical facilities in good shape. The findings implicate that the head teachers should accept the maintenance of physical facilities as their responsibility and device necessary support to make it in good shape.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendation was made. First, the head teachers should sensitize the teachers and students on properly treating the classrooms' physical facilities. Second, the head teachers should assign teachers on weekly duties, class teachers and other delegated teachers to supervise the cleanliness of classrooms in their section and the entire school environment. Third, head teachers should ensure that any student that breaks or damages any classroom physical facilities must be responsible for the repair. Fourth, the head teachers should strategize ways to get internally generated revenue to have funds to use when the time arises through Parent Teachers Association (PTA), community members and philanthropists. Finally, the government should always play their roles by providing maintenance funds for primary schools and promptly supplying classroom facilities when necessary.

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