

Improving Teacher Effectiveness Through Healthy School Environment in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated Teacher Effectiveness Through Healthy School Environment in Nigeria. Healthy School Environment is said to be one of the most efficient strategies that a nation might use to prevent major health and social problems with the aim of improving teacher education to boost teaching and learning in schools. The instrument used to elicit information was a questionnaire designed by the researchers titled Teacher Effectiveness Through Healthy School Environment in Nigeria Questionnaire. The descriptive research design of the survey type was used for the study. The population of the study was all the teachers in Nigeria Secondary Schools. From this, a sample of four hundred and three teachers were selected using simple random sampling technique. Two research questions were raised and two hypotheses were formulated. The data collected were analysed using percentages, frequency counts and chi-square. The result of the analyses showed that water and sanitation are vital issues in improving teacher effectiveness. The result also shows that security measures and safety of learners helps in the improvement of teaching and learning by ensuring punctuality, regularity in school attendance. Finally, nutrition helps learner to concentrate in the class. It was therefore concluded that government should ensure that regular washing of hands, drinking of clean water, punctuality and regularity in school attendance be considered as vital in the improvement of Teacher Effectiveness in Nigeria schools to enable optimal performance of the teachers in ensuring effective teaching and learning in the schools.

Keywords: Improving, Teacher, effectiveness, healthy, environment.

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Introduction

Student and teacher comfort is indicated as the most important aspect of any school environment. If students are comfortable, then learning becomes much easier. Being comfortable is a combination of several different factors; adequate usable space, noise control, lighting, temperature and climate control, and sanitation. WHO (2012) explain that cleanliness of schools is also an important aspect of school environments, clean schools not only lower the threat of the spread of illness, but also convey a caring message to the students and teachers. Cleaning and maintenance of schools is vitally important and is often underemphasized and underperformed. Students feel better going to clean classes and sitting in clean desks and surroundings. Sanitation in schools is important because young children face unique health hazards, especially respiratory infections, asthma attacks, skin disease, and diarrheal outbreaks.

A healthy school environment implements the policies and practices consistently throughout the day, every day, and in schools, before and after school programs (UNICEF, 2016). Allensworth and Diane (1994) also opined that a healthy school environment attends to the physical and aesthetic surroundings and to the school's psychosocial climate and culture, thus protecting the health and safety of students and staff and promoting health-enhancing behaviours. Cairncross (2013) argue that physical environmental concerns include indoor and outdoor safety hazards, access to sufficient quality of safe drinking water, facilities for proper sanitary disposal of excreta, provision of specialized toilets for learners with special needs and introduction of sound hygienic behaviours (such as proper hand washing) to prevent and reduce the burden of diseases. Biological or chemical agents that might be detrimental to health, air temperature and quality, precautions for infection control, lighting, noise levels, and access for persons with disabling conditions. The purpose is to promote healthy practices among learners and

members of the school community in order to prevent water and sanitation-related diseases, and thereby maximize the benefit from education (FME, 2000B)

Schools cannot achieve their primary mission of education if students and staff are not healthy and fit physically, mentally, and socially. UNICEF (2002) asserted that Healthy bodies and brains translate into improved academic performance and attendance. Children who are sick, hungry, abused, using drugs, who feel that nobody cares, or who may be distracted by family problems are unlikely to learn well. One child's lack of progress can impede the learning of the other children in the classroom as well. Education reform efforts are bound to be of limited effectiveness unless health-related barriers to learning are directly addressed. Allengrate John & Tyson (2012) writes, "First among those barriers are poor physical and mental health conditions that prevent students from showing up for school, paying attention in class, restraining their anger, quieting their self-destructive impulses, and refraining from dropping out". When surveyed, most parents and members of the general public consistently rate health as an important topic that schools should address.

A healthy School environment is said to be one of the most efficient strategies that a nation might use to prevent major health and social problems. Next to the family, schools are the major institution for providing the instruction and experiences that prepare young people for their roles as healthy, productive adults. This gives credence to the contribution of Marx Eva, Wooley and Susan, (2008) who added that healthy environment and success in school are inextricably intertwined. Good healthy environment facilitates children's growth, development, and optimal learning, while education contributes to children's knowledge about being healthy

The importance of a healthy school environment's ability to enhance the learning process has been demonstrated in many studies. However, many school facilities throughout the United States, estimated at more than 50%, have environmental problems. Problems are mostly related to water damage and ineffective cleaning. Even though schools are the focus of constant public discussion, political attention, and government support, more effort is needed to emphasize and provide "healthy" school facilities with emphasis on safety and security by way of design, operation, and maintenance (USEPA, 2012).

WHO (2011) Claimed there are many environmental health and safety requirements that all school facilities face. These include numerous fire safety codes, provisions for handicapped occupants, and numerous state and federal environmental statutes. However, the driving force behind successfully managing a school facility and its environment is not regulatory, or founded in government mandate. The real force behind a healthy school comes from the local community's commitment to a healthy school environment, free of distractions and detrimental health effects, so as to allow the learning process to move forward.

According to Weinstein (2011) a school environment should be one in which every student feels safe. We find promotion of safety by working with local law enforcement agencies to put security officers in schools. The presence of security officers often gives students a sense of safety and security. School safety is important to protect the student and staff in a school from abuse or any other sort of violence. A safe learning environment ensures an overall development of a child. Children who are taught in a safe environment are less likely to engage in risky behaviour. School security encompasses all measures taken to combat threats to people and property in educational environments (Kolawole 1987). One term connected to school security is school safety, which is defined as the sheltering of students from violence and bullying, as well as exposure to harmful elements such as drugs and gang activity.

This has also made the value of a sound teacher effectiveness lies in its effective implementation of healthy school environment and safety policy and it is the teacher who transforms the policy into practice. Adu (2010) asserted that the quality of a school and that of the teaching personnel so permeate each other that a vicious circle is created in analysis of their inter-relationship in which we cannot have a good school unless we have good teachers. Hence, an inspiration for good teachers should be a keystone for any national system of education. The process of learning is largely determined by the teacher (class activity, lesson presentation, knowledge of healthy school environment, security and safety variables, assessment techniques etc). The teacher therefore is the singular most important variable in the teaching learning process. According to Ambasht (2003), Jegede (2003) and Lassa (2000), teachers are the main determinant of the quality in education especially in developing countries like Nigeria. Also, according to the National Policy on Education (2004), no educational system may rise above the quality of its teachers. Abdulahi and Onasanya (2012), opined that inadequate supply of effective teachers with contemporary knowledge of education reform efforts are bound to be of limited effectiveness unless health-related barriers to learning are directly addressed thereby reducing one of the core educational problem because there is a direct link between healthy school environment, security and safety variables and quality of teachers. Perhaps it is in recognition of the positive relationship between healthy school environment, security and safety variables and academic performance that Obameata (2013) suggested Teacher education restructuring that will enhance improvement in the staffing situation in terms of quality and quantity with a view to prevent major health and social problems thus improving learning and raising the level of achievement in Nigerian schools. Also, Adesina (2003), remarked that the heart of Nigerian educational system is the teacher. According to him, the teacher is and will continue to be both the major indicator and the major determinant of quality education. In some situations,

where there are inexperienced teachers, and students are maltreated, students may lose interest in their teachers, which tend to increase stagnation or school dropout.

Statement of the Problem

The importance of a healthy school environment's ability to enhance the learning process has been demonstrated in many studies. However, many school facilities throughout the United States, estimated at more than 50%, have environmental problems. Problems are mostly related to water damage and ineffective cleaning (WHO 2002)

There are many environmental health and safety requirements that all school facilities face. These include numerous fire safety codes, provisions for handicapped occupants, and numerous state and federal environmental statutes. However, the driving force behind successfully managing a school facility and its environment is not regulatory, or founded in government mandate. It is on record that there is no reliable data on the implementation of healthy school environment, security and safety variables there are indications that few schools operate comprehensive, coordinated healthy school environment, security and safety programme design to systematically address the schools major health risk. Healthy school environment, security and safety variables were not available in some schools and few schools are known to sponsor health promotion activities for staff. (UNESCO, 2002). Hence, the researchers specifically prone into finding solutions to the observed unavailability of a well-coordinated water and sanitation, security and safety programmes to enhance effective teaching and learning, thus promoting teacher effectiveness.

Research Questions

To be able to make an objective assessment of the product of school health programme. The following general questions were raised to pilot the study.

- (i) Will water and sanitation improve teaching and learning?
- (ii) Will safety and security of learners improve their level of concentration or readiness to learn

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested

- (i) Water and sanitation will not significantly improve teaching and learning.
- (ii) Safety and Security of learners will not significantly improve their level of concentration or readiness to learn

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of school healthy environment on teaching and learning in the school. The study therefore investigated the extent to which water and sanitation, safety and security of learners were able to achieve the objective of encouraging academic and professional growth of teachers in the classroom.

Methodology

Descriptive research of the survey type was used to enable the researchers provide final assessment of the overall impact of the programme on the populace in the light of the objectives of the programme.

The population for the study comprised of all teachers in Nigerian Secondary Schools. The sample consisted 403 teachers in Nigeria who were selected using simple random sampling techniques from the sampled areas.

The instruments used was a questionnaire titled Teacher Effectiveness Through Healthy School Environment Questionnaire. The questionnaire has two parts (A & B). Part A is the bio-data which sought information on name of Institution attended by teacher, year of graduation, sex, qualification, area of specialization, present employer, school, position in school, status. The respondents were asked to fill the bio-data as appropriate to them. Part B of the questionnaire consisted of 25 items which sought information concerning the impact of school health programme on teaching and learning.

The methods used in validating the instrument were face, and content validity procedures. Fifty four items were constructed. These items were presented to specialists in Tests construction and researchers in teaching profession who have been involved in research for a long time. For face validation, experts determined at face value the appropriateness of the instrument in measuring what was studied to ascertain if the instrument contained the appropriate items which could actually elicit the intended responses on teaching learning effectiveness. Also experts reviewed the items in terms of clarity to ensure that all words that could confuse respondents or research

assistants were removed. In all twenty-four items were used for the study. Experts' judgments were also used in ensuring content validity.

A test-retest method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. 30 copies of the questionnaire were administered on the respondents that were not part of the sample used for the study. After two weeks of first administration the test was re-administered. Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient was used to analyse the two tests and a reliability coefficient of 0.69 was obtained. This was found to be reasonably high and therefore considered reliable for the study.

Four research assistants were used. Each of the research assistants was instructed to visit the sampled schools for the administration of the instrument. The researchers and research assistants were able to reach the teachers at their work places. Personal contact between the researchers, research assistants and respondents enhanced better understanding of the items in the instruments. The copies of the questionnaire were collected after completion.

The data generated were analysed using percentages, frequency counts, and chi square.

Results

This aspect of the paper presents the analysis of the data collected for the study.

Descriptive Analysis

Question 1: Will water and sanitation not improve teaching and learning?

In analysing this general question, scores of responses of teachers were collected and the analyses were made on the bases of their responses. The finding is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Responses of respondents on water and sanitation

		Teachers	
		Yes	No
1	Do your school provide students with drinking water?	80.2%	19.8%
2	Will you describe your school compound as clean?	90.1%	9.9%
3	Do you have special treatment for your water?	75%	25%
4	Do you have toilets for boys and girls	71.2%	29.8%
5	Do your school provide water and soap for learners to wash their hands	64.5%	35.5%

Table 1 revealed that 80.2% submitted that there is provision of drinking water for their students and 90.1% agreed that their school compound is neat and clean, 75% agreed that their water is specially undergoing treatment and 71.2% agreed that toilets is available for their students use, while 64.5% agreed that there is availability of water and soap for learners to wash their hands.

Question 2: Will safety and security improve the level of regularity and attendance among learners?

In analysing this general question, scores of responses of teachers were collected and the analyses were made on the bases of their responses. The finding is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Responses of respondents on safety and security.

		Teachers	
		Yes	No
1	Do you think your students are afraid of going to school alone?	74.3%	25.7%
2	Do your student feel safer at school?	85%	15%
3	Has anyone in your school been attacked on the way to or at school?	23.5%	76.5%
4	Have you ever come under threat to do some things for students?	10.1%	89.9%
5	Is your school always safe?	95.1%	4.9%

Table 2 shows that 74.3% of the respondents have the feelings that learners are afraid of going to school alone and 85% agreed that students feel safer when they are in the school whereas 23.5% attested to the fact that there has been a case of student been attacked while coming to school, very few teachers confessed that they have on few occasion did some things to students under threat probably in a bid to save their lives. However, majority of the teachers with the percentage of 95.1% confirmed that their school s safer meaning that there is tight security in their schools.

Hypotheses testing

Hypothesis 1: Water and sanitation will not significantly improve teaching and learning.

Table 3: Chi-square (χ^2) analysis showing the effect water and sanitation on teaching learning.

S/N	Items	Teachers				
		Yes	No	χ^2C	χ^2t	Df
1	Do your school provide students with drinking water?	80.2%	19.8%	15.163	3.84	1
2	Will you describe your school compound as clean?	90.1%	9.9%	46.645		
3	Do you have special treatment for your water?	75%	25%	57.948		
4	Do you have toilets for boys and girls	71.2%	29.8%	56.721		
5	Do your school provide water and soap for learners to wash their hands	64.5%	35.5%	55.948		

Table 3 indicated that the null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 level of significance which implies good water and sanitation is a base for good health which improves the readiness of learners to learn as the teacher to be able to teach with ease.

Hypothesis 2: Safety and security will not significantly improve the level of regularity and attendance among learners.

Table 4: Chi-square (χ^2) analysis showing the effect of safety and security on level of regularity among learners.

S/N	Items	Teachers				
		Yes	No	χ^2C	χ^2t	Df
1	Do you think your students are afraid of going to school alone?	74.3%	25.7%	56.948	3.84	1
2	Do your student feel safer at school?	85%	15%	31.642		
3	Has anyone in your school been attacked on the way to or at school?	23.5%	76.5%	57.958		
4	Have you ever come under threat to do some things for students?	10.1%	89.9%	17.907		
5	Is your school always safe?	95.1%	4.9%	36.792		

Table 4 indicated that the null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 level of significance which implies that safety and security of learners is basic to improve teaching and learning in school.

Discussion

The study investigated Improving Teacher Effectiveness through Healthy School Environment in Nigeria. In the analysis several findings were made. The finding revealed that water and sanitation is an important index in enhancing Teacher Effectiveness in Nigerian schools. This finding supports Marx Eva, Wooley and Susan, (2008) added that health and success in school are inextricably intertwined. Good health facilitates children's growth, development, and optimal learning, while education contributes to children's knowledge about being healthy. WHO (2012) also supported this finding through his argument that Clean schools not only lower the threat of the spread of illness, but also convey a caring message to the students and teachers. Cleaning and maintenance of schools is vitally important and is often underemphasized and underperformed. Students feel better going to clean classes and sitting in clean desks and surroundings. Sanitized water for drinking and washing hands in schools is important because young children face unique health hazards, especially respiratory infections, asthma attacks, skin disease, and diarrheal outbreaks.

The study also revealed that Safety and security are sacrosanct to effective teaching and learning. This agrees with the report of Kolawole (1987) that School safety is important to protect the student and staff in a school from abuse or any other sort of violence. A safe learning environment ensures an overall development of a child. Children who are taught in a safe environment are less likely to engage in risky behaviour. School security encompasses all measures taken to combat threats to people and property in educational environments. One term connected to school security is school safety, which is defined as the sheltering of students from violence and bullying, as well as exposure to harmful elements such as drugs and gang activity

Specifically, the result shows that that teachers who have knowledge of healthy school environment and safety policy teaches better in the classroom. This finding agrees with the submission of Adu (2005) who asserted that the quality of a school and that of the teaching personnel so permeate each other that a vicious circle is created in analysis of their inter-relationship in which we cannot have a good school unless we have good teachers. Hence, an inspiration for good teachers should be a keystone for any national system of education. The process of learning is largely determined by the teacher (class activity, lesson presentation, knowledge of healthy school environment and safety policy, assessment techniques etc). Therefore, effort geared towards improving teacher effectiveness without recourse to healthy school environment and safety policy is a ruse

Conclusion

The study has confirmed that water and sanitation are sacrosanct to educational improvement to boost effective teaching and learning. It is evident in this study that what you don't have you don't give luckily here teachers shows that their knowledgeable in the intertwining situation of health and success in school and capable of handling school health and safety situations. The implication of this is that not all factors that enhances good performance of teacher and learners are resident in them. Therefore, there is the need to look outside the duo in boosting teaching and learning in schools which makes school environment and safety of learners a top priority. It can be concluded that any attempt made in improvement of teacher effectiveness in Nigeria without considering school environment and security of learners is an effort in futility.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was therefore recommended that government must attach importance to healthy school environment, safety and security of learners as a serious issue at the level of curriculum review, development and orchestrations. At various level of governmental functioning training and retraining programmes must be arranged for both teachers and students to keep them abreast of the vintage position of healthy school environment, safety and security of learners to success in schools.

In practical terms, government should also afford to make available good water projects in schools. Schools should also provide toilet facilities for both male and female students. Another recommendation is that provision of washing hand basin and soap for students to wash their hands should be made compulsory in all schools. It is also recommended that the programme of perimeter fencing and availability of security officer's presence in the school should be made compulsory in all schools.

Furthermore, a concerted effort by government and individuals to strengthen the security and safety of the students should be made a priority. Finally, all schools must be kept clean at all times.

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