

THE ROLE OF SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AS A DETERMINANT FACTOR FOR QUALITY EDUCATION IN BAUCHI STATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS - NIGERIA

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Abstract: This study was carried out to ascertain the “The Role of School Environment as a Determinant Factor for Quality Education in Bauchi State primary schools.” This study employed T- test statistics and mean in analysing the data collected. The population for the research constituted teaching staff drawn from lower basic primary schools of 2013/14 Academic session. Altogether, 180 teaching staff were randomly selected and used out of the 18 selected primary schools of the state. Information were obtained through school records, interview and questionnaires. The findings of the study revealed that: Primary Schools environment are not conducive for teaching- learning process, there is inadequate buildings, furniture and teaching materials. These together with other factors attributed to poor quality education in primary schools of the state.

Keywords: Role, School Environment, Quality Education and Primary Schools.

Introduction

According to Adebajo (2012), “the importance of education to human beings cannot be over emphasized. Education is a human right that should be accorded to all human beings solely by reason of being human”. Education is an important factor in every individual’s life; it is the key to a better future. Education is said to be the bed rock of positive development of a country, as it serves as a spring board to the well being of the nation. It also serves as the hub through which all sectors of any economy are powered. Education is an indispensable vehicle for the production of progressive leadership and enlightened follow ship in every society. It is both an investment on human capital and also a pre-requisite for economic development of a nation. Education is a necessary tool for human development from the elementary stage to the tertiary level, a child is nurtured into adulthood as a result, and it should be given proper attention and special consideration.

Objective of the Study

This study aimed at:

1. Examining the status of primary education in Bauchi state.
2. Identifying the problems/ obstacles of primary school education,
3. Proffering possible solutions and suggestions towards improving qualitative education in the state and our society at large.

Research Questions:

1. What are the natures of primary schools environment condition in Bauchi state?
2. Do we have qualitative primary education in Bauchi state?
3. Are primary school environment challengeable and conducive for teaching-learning?

Hypothesis:

For the purpose of this research, the below null hypothesis will be tested.

HO. There is no significant difference between the urban and rural primary school Teachers on the nature of School Environment as a determinant factor for quality education in Bauchi State primary schools.

Significance of the Study

This study will be of great importance to government, policy planners and stakeholders in taking appropriate measures towards ensuring both quantitative and qualitative primary education in Bauchi state. In addition, the study will be of great importance to both teachers and students of primary school in tidying things up in connection to teaching and learning processes to be more committed and diligent to their responsibilities so as to ensure qualitative primary education in the state. Parents and the community also will be better informed on their roles as first teacher of their wards and how they should continue to play their role for their wards while at school by motivating and encouraging their studies.

Methodology

For the purpose of this study, the researcher adopted two methods which are thought to be suitable for this research, namely: Questionnaire and Interview. The target population of this research composes of primary school teachers and Head teachers in Bauchi state. Considering the size of the population and the time frame, eighteen primary schools were selected for sampling, ten in each of the selected schools. They were randomly selected. A total number of 180 questionnaires were distributed with the help of some teaching staff. The researcher conducted verbal interview with the few purposively selected teaching staff who voluntarily

participated in the exercise for further verification and confirmation of data. The data collected were then analyzed and presented using Mean and t-test statistic.

Related Literature

Learning Environment

“Environment is the sum total of all surrounding of a living organism, including natural forces, and other living things which provides conditions for development and growth as well as of danger and damage”, (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/environment.html>).

It is imperative to note that learning can occur anywhere, but the positive learning outcomes generally sought by educational systems happen in quality learning environments. Learning environments are made up of physical, psychological environment, family and community environment and the larger (Nigeria) society.

The Physical Elements (Facilities)

Physical learning environment are the places, in which formal learning occurs, ranging from relatively modern and well-equipped buildings to open-air gathering places. The quality of school facilities seems to have an indirect effect on learning, an effect that is hard to measure. Some authors argue that “extant empirical evidence is inconclusive as to whether the condition of schooling buildings is related to higher student achievement after taking into account student’s background” (Fuller, 1999). “A study in India, however, sampled 59 schools and found that of these only 49 had buildings and of these, 25 had a toilet, 20 had electricity, 10 had a school library and four (4) had a television”, (Carron & Chau, 1996, UNICEF 2000)

In this case, “the quality of the learning environment was strongly correlated with pupils’ achievement in Hindi and Mathematics” (Carron & Chau, 1996).

In Latin America, a study included 50,000 students in grades three and four found that children whose schools lacked classroom materials and had an inadequate library were significantly more likely to show lower test scores and higher grade repetition than those whose schools were well equipped (Willms, D. 2000). Other studies, carried out in Botswana, Nigeria and Papua New Guinea, concur with these latter findings (Pennyckick, 1993 UNICEF 2000).

The physical setting for learning such as the classroom, the library, laboratories, equipment and other places where formal teaching is done, greatly affects the learner either positively or negatively.

The Psychological Environment

The psychological environment for learning refers to the kind of atmosphere which the teacher creates for interaction between him and his pupils. Studies have shown that learning will proceed smoothly and enthusiastically if pupils see the relationship between them and their teacher as non-threatening, warm and loving. They should see themselves as participating actively in the process of learning and also in some decisions that affect them. This contrasts with a style in which the teacher shows no regard for the children, subjects them to abuse and ridicule, humiliates them and even brutalizes them thereby causing them physical harm. The latter style can only result in alienation from the teacher and dislike of schooling. The psychological environment also has to do with the relationship between one learner and the other within the classroom. Children need to be taught the spirit of healthy competition respect for others, and co-cooperativeness' as important qualities which they require to be in school. Aggressiveness, temper, tantrums, envy and jealousy cannot form the basis for a healthy environment within the school.

The Family and Community Environment

What happens outside the classroom also affect the process of learning. It is obvious that the child's first school is his home. The ideas and experiences that he gets from his father, mother and other siblings help him to advance the work of the school. They are meant to play supportive roles to the school in terms of everyday care of the child and his education. The educated parents can do some work which supplements that of the school. Unfortunately, the struggle for survival often keeps a child's parents out of home for considerable periods of time. The net effect is that, they do not have time to attend to the needs of the children for learning.

In addition, only a few parents own the kinds of resources which are required for good education of the child such as radio, television, books, newspaper, magazines and so on. More so, the village or town in which a child lives may be far from having a library. Thus, the child finds himself abandoned only to the work of the teacher in the classroom. Such work makes little allowance for the individual attention which a child is meant to receive during learning.

The Larger Society

The school exists to advance the intellectual performance of the child. In line with this, it organizes experiences which should achieve these stated objectives. However, one finds that the larger society emphasizes other values which do not sustain the work of the school. The

young children get the impression through what local leaders say and do that it does not pay for one to go to school. Experience shows that some of the least paid workers also happen to be those who have the greatest record of schooling. People whose minds are not well developed get more money and recognition in the society than those who have theirs trained. This raises doubts in the minds of children who begin to wonder whether any point is made in going to school. The result is that a large number of young people, either refuse to learn or drop out from school and take to other activities. The problem is a serious one, the solution to which would require hard and fast reasoning.

Inclusive Environment

Reducing other forms of discrimination is also critical to quality improvement in learning environments. Most countries, in all parts of the world, struggled with effective inclusion of students with special needs and disabilities. An examination of special education policies and practices in China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Korea, Thailand and Vietnam found that although most educational policies include some philosophy of inclusion, significant gaps between policies and actual practices in schools and classrooms exist (Mitchell, 1995). Children of the ethnic and language minorities, political or geographically disfavored groups, and groups of low socio-economic levels may also suffer from discriminatory policies and practices that hinder the advancement of quality education for all children. This can occur by excluding such children from school or by excluding their participation in school once they are attending. In general, continued restructuring of most learning environments needs to occur to improve learning opportunities for children of all abilities and backgrounds.

Non-Violence

War and other forms of interpersonal and group conflict clearly have an impact on children's mental health and their ability to learn. Many young victims of violence suffer lasting physical, psychological, social-emotional and behavioral effects. Although it is difficult for schools to provide safe havens from some forms of violence, other forms can be effectively prevented through interventions (World Health Organization, 1998).

In conclusion, a system that focuses on quality education allows children to develop and grow in school environments that are supportive and at some time challenging, which nurture them to become confident, have a good self-esteem and willing to strive forward yet at the same time feel a sense of responsibility towards others in their community. We believe that

all our schools can be such places where children of different abilities develop, learn and grow together.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Result

Table 1: Means and standard deviations of responses on the nature of primary schools environment in Bauchi State

Item No	Item statement	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Sc have adequate building and furniture	180	2.5	1.1	Disagree
2	Instructional materials are well provided	180	2.5	1.0	Disagree
3	School environment is not highly supportive and challengeable	180	3.1	1.4	Agree
4	There is adequate health facilities	180	3.3	1.4	Agree
5	School environment is clam and non-violent	180	3.5	1.5	Agree
6	The school environment is highly conducive for learning	180	2.5	1.2	Disagree
7	In primary school, classrooms are overcrowded	180	3.7	1.5	Agree
	Grand Mean		3.0		Agree

Note: N = number of samples, SD = Standard Deviation

The data presented in the above table revealed the means and standard deviations of responses of primary school teachers on the nature of school environment conditions in Bauchi state. The Mean ranges on each from 3.0 to 3.7 indicate a high degree of acceptance. The standard deviation on each item ranges from 1.0 to 1.5 showing closeness in the responses of the respondents. Majority of the respondents agreed that classrooms are overcrowded (Mean = 3.7, SD = 1.5), school environment is highly supportive and challengeable (Mean = 3.1, SD = 1.4), there is adequate health facilities (Mean = 3.3, SD = 1.4), school environment being calm and non-violent (Mean = 3.5, SD = 1.5). The result also showed that the respondents disagreed that adequate building and furniture are provided (Mean = 2.5, SD = 1.1), instructional materials are not well provided (Mean = 2.5, SD = 1.0). The primary school teachers also disagreed on the statement that the school environment is highly conducive for learning (Mean = 2.5, SD = 1.2). Computing the average mean responses of primary school teachers on the seven item statements showed that there was high degree of acceptance (agreement) in the teachers' responses indicating the nature of primary school environment condition in Bauchi State is nothing to write home about. According to

Pennychick (1993), UNICEF (2000:5), “the physical setting for learning such as classroom, library, laboratories, equipment and other places where teaching is done, greatly affects the learner either positively or negatively.” Amaele (2003:54), pointed out that, “the fast increasing in pupils’ enrolment couldn’t be equaled with the available human and material resources, this later result to a drop in the standard and quality of primary school work.”

Table 2: t-test analysis of mean responses of urban and rural primary school teachers on the nature of school environment condition as a determinant factor for quality education in Bauchi state primary schools

Group	N	\bar{X}	SD	t_cal.	df	p-value	Decision
Urban	90	2.83	1.45	0.50	1.96	0.05	NS
Rural	90	2.98	1.43				

Key: \bar{x} = Mean; SD = Standard deviation; N = Number of Male and Female primary school teachers; df = Degree of Freedom; p-value = level of significance; NS = Not Significant.

The above table depicted t-test analysis of the mean responses of urban and rural primary school teachers on the nature of school environment condition as a determinant factor for quality education in Bauchi state primary schools. It also revealed mean and standard deviation (SD) scores of urban primary school teachers as Mean = 2.83, SD = 1.45) and rural primary school teachers Mean and SD as 2.98 and 1.43 respectively. The t-calculated value is 0.50, which is lesser than the critical-t/p-value 0.05 level of significance at 1.96 degree of freedom. This indicates that the opinion of the urban and rural primary school teachers did not differ significantly on the nature of school environment condition as a determinant factor for quality education in Bauchi state. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the Mean ratings of urban and rural primary school teachers on the nature of school environment condition as a determinant factor for quality of education in Bauchi state.

Testing of Hypotheses

Based on the analysis of the above data, the null hypotheses formulated for this research was tested, below is the result:

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the urban and rural primary school Teachers on the nature of School Environment as a determinant factor for Quality Education in Bauchi State primary schools. The stated Hypothesis was accepted as it was confirmed that

there is no significant difference between the mean responses of urban and rural primary school teachers on nature of school environment condition as a determinant factor for quality education in Bauchi state.

Suggestions

Since it was discovered that most primary schools have in adequate buildings and furniture; instructional materials are not adequately provided; un conducive schools environments, it is therefore suggested that Government should accord high priority on education by creating enabling conditions for locally initiated and designed quality improvement initiatives by identifying and re-distributing resources to schools that are severely under- resourced and under- staffed.

It is suggested that school pupils should be allowed to develop and grow in school environments that are supportive and at the same time challenging which nurtures them to become confident, have good self- esteem and willing to strive forward, yet, at the same time feel a sense of responsibility towards others in their community.

Government should also accord high financial allocation to primary education considering the fact that education is the Bed- Rock of the society and primary education is fundamental,

Conclusion

In conclusion, based on the findings from the study, the entire null hypothesis framed were accepted because the results revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of both urban and rural primary school teachers on the nature of school environment as a determinant factor for quality education in Bauchi state primary schools,

The researcher was able to find out that there are no adequate buildings and furniture in the primary schools in Bauchi state, classrooms are overcrowded, instructional materials are not well provide, the schools environments are not highly conducive for teaching- learning since there are no adequate building and furniture leading to poor quality education in schools.

During the past decade much has been done globally to provide quality basic education for children, an obligation for the convention on the rights of the child. In all aspects of the school and its surrounding education community, the rights of the whole child, and children to survive, protection, development and participation are at the centre. But yet, not much has been achieved.

It is therefore hoped that the findings and recommendations made in this study will be given adequate attention by school pupils, parents, teachers, society, school administrators,

educationists, policy makers, stakeholders and government considering the role education plays in nation building and the entire society at large.

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