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CONTENTS PAGE

Editorial Team - - - - - - - - - iv

GLOJACARF Statement - - - - - - - - - v

Guidelines for Contributors - - - - - - - - vi

Etim Bassey Umoh
Educational Television: The Imperative in Biological Science Teaching and Learning - - - - - - - - - - - 1

Ben, Victor E. &Udoka, Nsikak C.
The Knowledge and Use of Contraceptives among Female Adolescents in the Rural Areas of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria - - - - - - 13

Okeke Stella U., Iwara Helen B.& Archibong Helen E.
Problems of Curriculum Implementation in Nigeria:Social Studies in Focus - 34

Edidem, E. U. & Udoh, O. E.
Building Effectiveness in Recreation Content Delivery for Professionalism of Physical and Health Education in Primary Schools - - - - - 51

Ugbejeh, Samson Onyemaeki
Causes of Principal-Teacher Conflicts in the Management of Public Secondary Schools - - - - - - - - - 59

Tinja, R. M. *PhD*, Tijani, O. A. & Tanko B. A. *PhD*
Ethics, Skills and Competency: Potent Tools for Counselling Youths for National Transformation in Nigeria - - - - - - - 71

Onoungbo, C. P., Obara, J. K. *PhD*& Audu, Y. D. *PhD*
Integrating Environmental Education into the Senior Secondary Curriculum - - 83

Obara, J. K. *PhD*, Abulokwe, A. C. & Osu, Azuanamibebi D.
Entrepreneurial Education for Sustainable Development of the Future of Nigeria Economy - - - - - - - - - - 92

Ikeanyionwu C. L. *PhD*, Enwere J. O., Uka V. O. &Okeke, K. C. *PhD*
Single Treasury System and Financial Accountability in Nigeria: Issues of Concern - - - - - - - - - - 99

Abdulwahab, Rafiu & Promise-Adele Nkechinyere
Availability of School Facilities for Pre-Primary and Primary School: Implications for Quality Instruction - - - - - - - 109

Olumati, P. N., Oguzor, C. U. & Tew, B. C.
Innovations and Curriculum Development in Home Economics Education:
Implications for Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria - - - - - 1

Rev. Agweye A. O. Okpachui *PhD*
Religion: The Fundamental Problems in the Contemporary Society - - 1

Availability of School Facilities for Pre-Primary and Primary School: Implications for Quality Instruction

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Abstract

The school is a formal place that is constructively organized to impact useful knowledge, skills, norms and aptitudes which make the receiver acceptable, participatory and contributory to his/her society and nation at large. The above inference can only be translated meaningfully when the school is equipped with requisite facilities. This research work examined school facilities within and outside the classrooms bearing in mind its implications on school children. It equally established a contrastive relationship between teaching and learning resources, its adequacy on learner's performance. The researchers submit that the goal, achievement and attainment of the overall objectives suffice in line with the school infrastructures. Therefore, equipping the school is a necessity for quality learning instruction

Key words: Availability, School Facilities, Pre-primary, Primary, School, Quality Instruction.

Introduction

The school facility is a vital ingredient in the educational system.It refers to all the fundamental physical settings put in place both within and outside the four wall of the classroom that makes a school a child-friendly environment. It includes not only buildings or classroom structures but library, health services, ICT centre, Montessori room or access to social amenities, professional caregivers or teachers in question, furniture, etc. It has a great impact on the teaching and learning at any level of education, particularly the pre-primary and primary level that is considered a foundational hub of education. The cardinal objective of pre-primary education is to effect a smooth transition of the child from home to school. To ensure a smooth experience and entire learning package in school in the course of transiting to translate all that the child acquires at the pre-school stage into permanent literacy, numeracy and grooming further the child on how to communicate effectively depends largely on the comfort of the school while the

comfort of the school is hinged on the availability of school facilities. Equally, the quest of the child to imbibe virile manipulative, gross motor, scientific, technological, affective and psycho-social and more importantly creative skills depends on both the internal and external facilities available in the school.

Hurn (2005) re-iterated that the school serves a dual purpose depending on its nature. To the pupils in the school, it can easily motivate learning and yield progressive outcomes. On the other hand, it can be frustrating and disturbing place for learning. These roles are easily predicted by the nature, structure, type and appearance of the school environment. Akuego (2005) noted that, the environment makes it possible for talents to grow and that every aspect of child development are influenced by what the child sees and feels around him. It is the environment that provides food for growth as well the opportunity for effective learning. How the child learns in school depends largely on the environmental constituents, teachers or caregivers in question, exposure to facilities and equipment.

Ogbu (1997) in Mapaderum (2002) also observed that school physical education resources (facilities, equipment supplies and the personnel) are very important to the successful implementation of the school physical education programme. Writing on availability of school facilities and academic achievement Owoeye and Olatunde (2011) as quoted by Lyons (2012) opined that availability of school facilities is a potent factor to quantitative education. According to them the importance of provision of instructional facilities for teaching and learning in the education sector cannot be over-emphasized. The authors added; "teaching is inseparable from learning but learning is not separable from teaching". According to them this means that teachers do the teaching to make the students learn, but students can learn without the teachers. They added that learning can occur through one's interaction with one's environment. Environment here refers to facilities that are available to facilitate students learning outcome.

Umeoduagu, (2000) asserts that resources should be provided in quality and quantity for effective teaching in schools. Mapaderum (2002) emphasized that the availability and adequacy of learning facilities and equipment promote effective teaching and learning activities in schools while their inadequacy affects the academic performance negatively. Also, Alor (2006) stressed that besides having sound instructional programme on ground, the number and qualification of the teacher is yet another important factor to be considered in teaching of physical education in secondary schools. According to the author, equally important apart from availability of adequate facilities and equipment is the teacher's experience on the Job. Akin-Taylor and Aboyomi (2008) noted that availability of adequate facilities and equipment is of vital importance in physical education.

Abdulwahab (2010) noted that, the success of education in any category of learning is far from mere putting up structures or beautiful policy or initiated educational plan but more of infrastructural facilities, inform of buildings and accommodation for teaching and learning. The policy equally needs teaching and learning instructional materials to attain its stated objectives of education. It is significant to state that no matter how beautiful and well famed our educational laws; it would continue to fail if premium is not placed on the school infrastructures. The school facilities remain, like the laboratory in which to

experiment, the strength and weaknesses of the educational plan. Equipping the pre-primary and primary schools further remains the only alternative to succeed in the educational plan of a nation. School facilities remain inform of "Black box" of an aeroplane, "Engine house" of a factories and firm. You can imagine the roles of each of the aforementioned in ensuring quality instruction!

According to Mohammed (2005), the difficult learning environment in most of our schools may substantially undermine the progress of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria. In fact, school children in some areas of the country still study under trees, dilapidated buildings without furniture and learning materials. Fafunwa (2004) stated that teachers could be compared to farmers who cultivate with bare hands or sometimes with anticipated hope in which at times they have high crop yield while most cases they fail, not that they love failure but because most of the instruments needed are not available for use. In fact, school facilities and equipment are essential aids to effective teaching and learning: They are teachers' trade tools'

School Facilities Within and Outside the Classrooms

Federal Republic of Nigeria FRN) in its National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013) enshrined the need to provide educational services for our educational institutions. Such services should include school library, basic health, basic health schemes, counselling centres, educational resources centres, integration of information and communication technology into Nigeria education and production of textbooks in Nigeria languages and maintenance of early childhood educational facilities. Hence, with this lofty objectives, Federal Government approves budgets and stratified such budgetary allocation to main stream of education in Nigeria, the state and local government through counterpart funding formula to service the basic education by providing grants for repairs, renovation, construction of class rooms, provision of materials and equipment such as exercise books, textbooks, computers, free meal, free education especially in a clustered state. This was done to better the basic education programme of the Federal Government.

Debby (2003) highlighted the need for the availability of the following indoor and outdoor facilities, materials and equipment for pre-school child-care centers as:

1. Blocks of classrooms
2. Staffrooms
3. Pupils laboratories workshops
4. Libraries
5. Laboratory equipment
6. Consumables
7. Audio-visual aids
8. Electricity
9. Water
10. Chairs and tables
11. Stationeries
12. Playground

13. Storage spaces
14. Building toys (small wooden blocks/cubes, magnetic blocks)
15. Ramps, boards, cardboard cylinders
16. Floor road map/carpet
17. Small toy people representing various ethnic groups, ages, abilities
18. Puzzles (variety of textures – foam, plastic, wood, multi texture, different complexities, knobbed, without knobs, variety of pieces)
19. Hats, including hard hats, hats used in different jobs, sun hats
20. Child-size tables and chairs
21. Low, open shelves
22. Carpet area (floor puzzles)
23. Large and small crayons
24. Play dough
25. Pens, pencils, erasers, coloured pencils
26. Traffic/road signs
27. Fantasy books (pretend stories about people and pretend stories about animals)
28. Climbing equipment
29. Sports equipment (child-size basketball hoop, plastic bats, hockey sticks)
30. Dramatic play toys
31. Flowers
32. Living things (pets: acceptable to health authorities, plants, flowers, aquariums/fish bowls with fish, snails, bird houses and feeders visible from a window)
33. Natural objects: (flowers, leaves, shells, rocks, pine cones, bird nests, feathers etc.)
34. Nature science books/posters, games, puzzles (factual books/posters such as animals, plants, birds, fish, human body, seasons, weather, planets, environment, maps, globe, atlas, x-rays etc.)
35. Nature/science materials (magnifying glasses, prepared slides/microscopes, bug viewers, sink and float items, pulleys/levers etc.)
36. Musical instruments (bells, piano, triangles, xylophones, rhythm sticks, tambourines, drums, maracas, cymbals, and tone blocks from various cultures.

Equally, Abdulwahab (2010) averred that adequate classrooms equipped with furniture, clean-tidy and ventilated classrooms with sufficient space, pupils with desks and tables, comfortable sitting arrangement, classrooms decoration, painted and coloured environment, literacy inducing facilities/materials in the classrooms such as wall charts, captions and diagrams, picture charts, calendar, wall clock, pre-caution and safety diagrams, cartoons, discovery table in classrooms, maps and globes, number and alphabetical charts, lexicon materials, children's novels, kiddies books, dictionary, chart on walls, atlases, bottle tops, among others, make the school a literacy friendly environment.

Teaching and Learning Resources and Quality Performance

Teaching and learning resources comprise basically three components: material resources, physical facilities and human resources (DFID, 2007).Studies done in the past with regard to availability of teaching and learning resources in

education reveal that teaching and learning resources are not always available in Public schools. This inadequacy of teaching and learning resources has been of serious concern to educators.

According to Lyons (2012) learning is a complex activity that involves interplay of pupils' motivation, physical facilities, teaching resources, and skills of teaching and curriculum demands. Availability of teaching learning facilities therefore enhances the effectiveness of schools as they are the basic resources that bring about good academic performance in the students. The necessary resources that should be available for teaching and learning include material resources, human resource such as teachers and support staff and, physical facilities such as blocks of classrooms, staffrooms, laboratories, workshops, libraries, laboratory equipment, consumables, audio-visual aids, electricity, water, chairs, tables, stationeries, playground, storage spaces and others which school has classrooms. Teaching and learning resources help improve access and educational outcome since students are less likely to be absent from schools that provide interesting, meaningful and relevant experiences to them. These resources should be provided in quality and quantity in schools for effective teaching-learning process.

Momoh (2010) conducted a research on the effects of instructional resources on pupils' performance. The achievements of pupils were related to the resources available for teaching. He concluded that material resources have a significant effect on pupils' achievement since they facilitate the learning of abstract concepts and ideas and discourage rote-learning. When teaching and learning resources are inadequate, education is compromised and this inevitably is reflected in low academic achievement, high dropout rates, problem behaviors, poor teacher motivation and unmet educational goals.

Influence of Availability of Teaching and Learning Materials on Learners' Performance

Material resources include textbooks, charts, maps, audio-visual and electronic instructional materials such as radio, tape recorder, television and video tape recorder, physical resources such as stationeries, playground and storage spaces. Other categories of material resources consist of paper supplies and writing materials such as pens, eraser, exercise books, crayon, chalk, drawing books, notebooks, pencil, ruler, slate, workbooks and so on. Adeogun (2001) discovered a very strong positive significant relationship between school facilities and academic performance. According to Adeogun, schools endowed with more facilities performed better than schools that are less endowed. This corroborated the study by Babayomi (2017) that private schools performed better than public schools because of the availability and adequacy of teaching and learning facilities. Mwiria (1985) also supports that pupils' performance is affected by the quality and quantity of teaching and learning facilities. Institutions with adequate facilities stand a better chance of performing well in examination than poorly equipped ones. Therefore, poor performance could be attributed to inadequate teaching and learning materials and facilities.

Aparajita and Choudhury (2002) enunciated that play materials should be provided and arranged attractively in the classroom and placed on low open

shelves whenever needed. While children are playing and exercising their bodies, they are the same time acquiring knowledge about themselves and their environment. They make collection of objects which can be used to enhance/develop intellectual abilities through play, especially when children have to count, match, arrange, divide, make a pattern etc. For this, following simple materials can be of great use as proposed in the following context:

- Twigs
- Shells
- Sticks
- Beads
- Leaves
- Stones
- Seeds
- Mosaic bricks
- Puzzles
- Problem-solving toys
- Cards
- Constructional sets
- Matchboxes/cigarette packets
- Bottle-tops
- Buttons
- Marbles
- Painting materials
- Drawing materials
- Dice
- Picture cards
- Coloured arches
- Assembly toys
- Number stand
- Number board
- Number chain
- Number pegs
- Form stand
- Form board
- Form plates
- Gradation tubes
- Paper chart materials
- Blocks of all classes

Influence of Adequacy of Physical Facilities on Learners' Performance

The development and maintenance of physical facilities in our educational institutions by communities, parents, and sponsors should continue to be encouraged. This is because lack of such facilities interferes with learning process. DFID (2007) indicates the importance of school facilities in relation to

quality education. Difference in school facilities would be seen to account for difference in achievement. Physical facilities include classrooms, lecture theatres, auditoriums, administrative block, libraries, laboratories, workshops, play grounds, assembly halls, and special rooms like clinics, staff quarters, students' hostels, kitchen, cafeteria, and toilet amongst others. He further asserts that learning experiences are fruitful when there are adequate quantity and quality of physical resources; and that unattractive school buildings, crowded classrooms, non-availability of playing ground and surroundings that have no aesthetic beauty can contribute to poor academic performance. Fonseca and Conboy (2006) posit that the physical conditions and organization of school facilities gives better impression-construction of a culture of success. Ministry of Education Science and Technology(MOEST), (2005) explains the importance of ensuring that there are adequate and appropriate facilities for teaching and learning so that educational programme could be implemented effectively. Over the years and more especially in recent years, people from different facets of life-laymen, parents, clergy, educationists etc. have been very much concerned about the relationship between school facilities and students' academic performance in secondary schools. Some are of the opinion that school facilities have direct relationship with students' academic performance while others hold that inadequate school facilities can have adverse effect on pupil's performance.

Implications of School Facilities for Quality Instruction On School Children

The researchers proposed the implications of availability of requisite facilities for quality instruction on learners as follows;

1. It is the nature of the environment that sometimes makes the learner stay out of school and make teaching and learning weary, less appreciative, boring and ineffective.
2. School facilities bring about creativity in the child.
3. Environment that is adequately organized would reflect active involvement of pupils in learning activities thereby making them learn better.
4. School facilities bring about quality assurance and set standard in school.
5. Children prefer bright and exciting colour and that a colourful environment will give proper emotional attachment for better instruction.
6. Physical infrastructure is pivotal to any educational institution and is directly associated with performance of the learners.
7. The more requisite school facilities are institutionalized; the better stimulating learning could be.
8. School facilities enhance the translation of theoretical knowledge and values to more meaningful practical activities.
9. A school facility enhances individualized instructions.
10. Absence of school facilities is like a well-planned building without furniture and a car without fuel pump which causes discomfort to both teachers and learners.
11. School facilities are the basis for sound and qualitative education in Nigeria.
12. School facilities like instructional resources are fascinating, motivating and supportive.

13. The use of indoor and outdoor facilities enhances high intellectual precocity and thus ensures better psycho-social stimulation.
14. Provision of ICT is indeed a veritable tool at fast tracking meaningful instruction globally.
15. School infrastructure is the road map to scientific and technological breakthrough.
16. It is suicidal for a teacher to teach and for learners to be admitted when the requisites school facilities are lacking. In fact, it is a missing link with regards to the content and context of education.

Nikky (2010) in Babayomi (2017) summarized the following as some of the importance of teaching resources in teaching. Teaching resources help the teacher present concepts in a way that the learners can retain more concepts permanently. They help the teacher to motivate the students, by making the environment more interesting to the students. Teaching resources facilitates proper understanding by the students and discourage the act of cramming; it also makes the classroom or learning environment live and active

Conclusion and Recommendations

The content of this presentation is more of recommendation and it is hoped that all these need to be made available in the school, where the available needs to be maintained and sustained so as to achieve the intended goals and objectives of education across all levels. In order to painstakingly annex the aforementioned points, requires professional teachers/caregivers whose keen interest vendor on child education and whose responsibility goes beyond been a teacher or caregiver but more of being a parent.

The school environment could hinder the chances of child's learning. School re-agents in terms of furniture, curriculum to be learnt, the social factors of the school, libraries and laboratories, the use of instructional materials in class, the thermal condition and arrangement of the classrooms, neat and tidy environment, sufficient space for pupils to work and play, recreational and medical facilities, interior and exterior school decoration with colour and flower, access to computer (ICT), portable drinking water, constant power supply and general safety of learning environment among others, determine what the pupils get out of the school.

The school should be designed in such a way as to helping children discover their creative talents and capabilities. Admission into schools should be in line with schools' infrastructures. Remember, the country has had series of policies and they have turned to be a mirage not because those policies and programme are not genuine and germane but the environments where such policies operate are literacy aggressive. It is therefore imperative that the home, school and other agents of environmental changes should be collaborative so as to prepare the child in a more improved, knowledge-based and activity-oriented environment.

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