

**TOWARDS EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION AND MAINTENANCE OF PHYSICAL FACILITIES IN
OSUN STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, ILA-ORANGUN**

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Abstract

This paper examined the need for effective utilization and maintenance of physical facilities in Osun State College of Education, Ila-Orangun. The study focused on the 300 level students and covered the five schools in the college with emphasis on six large halls for Education and General Studies courses. The study was limited to only space utilization as it affected a student population of 3,871. Adequate and appropriate school facilities are sine qua non to the attainment of educational goals at all levels. In fact, proper management of physical facilities in Colleges of Education in Nigeria will boost the morale of teachers and learners as well as ensure the realization of the stated objectives of the school. It was discovered from the study that the College was not provided with adequate facilities, while students and staff maintenance culture contributed to high destruction of the available facilities. There was mismatch between growing enrolment and provision of facilities especially in respect of seats and hall accommodation for students, which has led to overcrowding and undue stress on the available space; the resultant effects of which was unruly behaviour, students hanging outside the classroom and obscene activities around school premises. All these have negative influence on teaching and learning process. Based on this discovery, it was recommended, among others, that educational planners, government and philanthropists should see to the well-being of the college, and that physical facilities' maintenance should be part of the orientation programme given to students, staff and administrators in the educational system.

Keywords: Effective Utilization, Physical Facilities, School Plant, Management Maintenance.

Introduction

The school could be viewed as an organized environment where educational curricular are interpreted. It is a formal structured organization which serves as a transitional stage in life between family and the society. According to Nwokafor (2001), the school plant is the totality of all things that make up a school system. It involves the physical and material facilities in form of buildings,

school site and environment that embody the school.

Education industry, like the industrial sector requires the use of human, material and financial resources for production to take place. According to Adeboyeje (2000), the school plant, which refers to the physical facilities (school buildings, equipment, school laboratories, and libraries among others

can be likened to the capital in an industrial sector. In fact, there is no controversy among scholars, researchers, educational planners and administrators in the fact that school physical facilities are essential ingredients towards which effective teaching-learning outcome can be realized.

In the same vein, Charis (2001), Dimmock (2004) and Adegoke (2005) agreed that the school plants include the site, the building and equipment and this include the permanent structures like workshop, libraries, classrooms, laboratories and semi-permanent structures like the educational system itself. Ajayi (2001) and Ijaduola (2008) clipped in that the school plant need to be adequately managed in order to ensure both effectiveness and efficiency of the system. Therefore, school plant planning could be regarded as the process of positioning school facilities in a comfortable place where educational activities could be achieved. In his submission, Adeyemi (2006) referred to school plant planning as the process of management, construction, utilization and maintenance of school facilities to ensure goal achievement.

Adeboyeje (2000) reported that schools with well-coordinated plant planning and maintenance practices recorded better students' performance. Students in newer and adequate school facilities schools outperformed students in older and inadequate school facilities. Conducive school physical environment could enhance students' school attendance, involvement in academic activities and academic performance positively. Okeke (2013) described facilities maintenance as the keeping of school site, building and equipment in as near their original state of utility as possible. School buildings and grounds must inevitably have tears and wears resulting from use, there must be regular maintenance for them to have a long life.

The provision of high-quality education programs is very important, but more important is investment in strong preventative maintenance programs such that school facilities can continue to serve students for long periods of time to achieve the stated objectives of the school.

As observed by Akinyemi (2013), an aspect of school management that is generally overlooked is facilities maintenance. This is because when new buildings are constructed and taken over by the appropriate authorities, practically no attention is paid to the maintenance of such buildings especially in public schools. School Principals and teachers who constantly use school facilities some time lack knowledge of facilities maintenance planning. Consequently, they fail to integrate facility maintenance into the management of the school. Facility maintenance involves providing clean and safe environment for teaching and learning. It also involves provision of adequate facilities for teaching and learning. For effective teaching and learning to take place, there must be a conducive classroom environment, hence such facility is necessary to be properly planned for bearing in mind that students' performance is enhanced in a positive classroom atmosphere and in an environment in which they feel safe, secured, cared for and involved. This means the classroom environment should be well equipped and planned. This will enhance the overall performance of the students.

Physical classroom environment should have light, proper ventilation, classroom size, condition of the classroom floor, walls, desks, chairs, chalk/white board, etc. the classroom should be spacious, desks should be properly arranged in a way that there will be easy movement within the class. Those seated at the back should be able to access the board and other instructional aid. Classroom should not be over populated

so that the teacher can carry everybody along. According to Gimah (2020), favourable physical environment has a significant positive effect on the efficiency of the school organization and acts as a catalyzing agent to provide a straight way for achieving predetermine goals. Unfortunately, some physical classroom environment is not conducive for smooth teaching and learning process.

Gimah observed further that a student sitting in an insufferable hot, airless room listening to lecture would not learn as much as he would in a cool comfortable space. It is important to note that poor maintenance and ineffective ventilation system lead to poor health among students as well as teachers, which lead to poor performance and higher absentees rates. These factors can adversely affect students' behaviour and lead to higher levels of frustration among teachers and poor learning attitude among students. It is also worthy of note that desk arrangement can affect students achievement and attention. A student in the classroom is said to be well seated if he has a clear view of the teacher, has suitable writing surface, and a place for book storage and the students going to and fro adjacent seats do not disturb him.

School plant maintenance is the act of returning or keeping of school plant to its original form after usage. This involves repainting of school building, repairs and replacement of faulty equipment to its original state. It is advisable all types of school plant are properly maintained for them to function and last longer. School heads need to make some repairs and replacement of damage school plant since they enhance effective teaching and learning process. Maintenance is the keeping of school building and equipment in as near their original condition as possible and it involves maintaining items, buildings, furniture and equipment as far as possible in their original conditions. Succinctly put, maintenance is the repair

and up keep of the school plant and equipment in order that efficiency service can be rendered.

According to Oparinde (2011), there are strong indications that the school facilities needed for effective learning are inadequate, and in some places, they are totally absent. Most of the primary and secondary schools in Nigeria are ugly sights to behold. In most of the older schools, there are de-roofed buildings, no office spaces, leaking roofs, cracked walls, broken-down: vehicles, typewriters, chairs and tables, doors and windows, walls, duplicating machines and photocopying machines without replacement. Some students still learn under mango-trees while many of the pupils and students sit on the floor to write even where classrooms are available. The teacher on his part has no writing materials, staffroom, tables, chairs and sometimes 'one-legged chalk board'

Most of the existing physical facilities in Nigerian Colleges of Education are in a state of disrepair. There is abundant evidence of inadequacies in the provision and judicious use of the available school plant. The population of students has continued to grow every year in these colleges at the expense of the available physical facilities for use and the proprietors of these institutions have failed to consider the need to expand or put in place new facilities thereby making the existing facilities over-utilized due to pressure on them and this has more often led to breakdowns of the existing facilities (Oparinde, 2011).

It appears adequate management and maintenance is not provided on the available school facilities. School facilities are supposed to be kept in good condition near their original state as much as possible by school administrators.

It is against the foregoing background information that this paper was embarked upon to examine the

utilization and maintenance of physical facilities in Osun State College of Education, Ila-Orangun.

Concept of School Facilities

The term 'School Physical Facilities' embraces school plant- school site, buildings, classroom, corridors, playgrounds and other lands, lighting, sanitary and other facilities, furniture and other equipment as well as consumables, which include paper, pencil, chalk, clusters, gum, staples and pins

School facilities can be defined as those things that enable the teacher to do his/her work very well and helping the learners to learn effectively. They are designed to enhance the process of teaching. The absence of school facilities implies the non-existence of any set up that may be referred to as school. The successful implementation of any educational programme depends mostly on the quality of available school facilities that are to be provided for such programme. This is supported by the view of Adaralegbe (2003) who posited that "the type of atmosphere required for effective learning is that consisting of better school buildings, more and better teaching facilities".

Adesina (2003) submitted that "the quality of education that our children get bears direct relevance to the availability or the lack of facilities and overall atmosphere where the learning takes place. Excellent school facilities and dedicated teachers are basic ingredients of good educational programme. The desire for education attainment is on the high side, the consumers of education therefore expect the attainment of standard and quality education that will give them a sense of belonging, fulfilment and satisfaction'.

School physical facilities are the essential materials that must be put in place and considered so that the

objectives of the school system can be accomplished. In other words, the availability of these facilities determines the quality of instruction and performance of the students in the school.

School Plant/Physical Facilities Management

Facilities management is a process that ensures that buildings and other technical systems support the operations of an organization. It is the practice of co-ordination of the physical workplace with the people and the work of the organization; it integrates the principles of business administration, architecture and the behavioral and engineering sciences (Atolagbe, Oparinde and Oyeniran, 2015).

Efficient management of the school facilities is mandatory in order to achieve a pleasant, safe, and comfortable centre for the community's activities. The management of school facilities implies the application of the theory, principles and practices of management to ensure that all available school facilities in the school system are available in required number and properly maintained against destruction. The responsibility of management of the school facilities requires a collective effort. Management processes which require provision, arrangement, coordinating, and maintenance are applied in facilities management.

Collaborative efforts bring into facilities management new ideas and perspectives. Over the years, school managers have emphasized that school facilities available for academic and non-academics activities are grossly inadequate. Available facilities in most schools may well be regarded as obsolete in terms of the quality and quantity. These facilities were provided when the students' population in the school was relatively low when compared to the

present population of the same school using the same facilities. Renovation and modernization of old and dilapidated buildings should be carried out to ensure that facilities for team planning, office space, clerical space, workrooms, professional development libraries, faculty dining area, storage space, students conference areas, guidance services area for large group instruction, spaces for instructional media, library resource centres, science facilities, arts and music studios, individual study area and physical education facilities are adequately taken care of for the attainment of educational goals and objectives (Atolagbe, Oparinde and Oyeniran, 2015).

School Facility Maintenance

Facilities maintenance is an issue that concerns all levels of educational system ranging from the pre-kindergarten to the tertiary level. Some of these facilities are architecturally obsolete and may therefore not contribute significantly to functional education. Maintaining, new building, renovating the old ones requires considerable expertise and commitment and material resources.

Within the framework of school plants as enumerated above, maintenance is work undertaken on any part of the school plant with the aim of keeping it or restoring it to near original status and optimum working condition.

According to Cole (1986) and Olagboye (1998), there are a number of maintenance types or forms usually carried out in an industry and which are applicable to the school system. These are:

- i. preventive maintenance which aims at preventing breakdown of facilities. It involves regular servicing of equipment like vehicles and duplicating machines to avoid situation of sudden breakdown;

- ii. corrective maintenance which is timely undertaken to rectify faults detected on plant like replacement of spark plug in a vehicle;
- iii. breakdown maintenance occurring as a result of ineffective or inefficient preventive maintenance and aims at rectifying breakdown in an equipment in the school and preparing contingency plans for the possible purchase of spare parts;
- iv. running maintenance is effected while the plant is in use or in operation e.g. servicing a generating set or school bus while lecture is in progress; and
- v. shutdown maintenance which is when a part of school plant or its entirety is shutdown to make repairs possible. A good example is Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria that was shut down over a period of time to effect rehabilitation by Major General Kotangora when he was appointed Sole Administrator (Ajiboye, 2002, 72).

The above forms of maintenance can be combined into planned programme of maintenance for each major piece of plant. Planned maintenance means that routine servicing and overhaul arrangements are scheduled in advance and contingency plans drawn up for unexpected breakdown. The effect of having planned maintenance is to minimize unforeseen faults or breakdown. Maintenance thus can make an important contribution in containing plant running cost as well as ensuring optimum plant availability.

The role of maintenance in planning and control system is to organize maintenance activities that the organization has the optimum availability

of plant in the conduct of its operations and that if the unexpected breakdown happens; it will be dealt with in the minimum possible time.

The basic background to plant maintenance is inculcating the habit of respect for school property in both staff and students. For this intention to be actualized however, conducive atmosphere must be created. For example, provision of functional facilities and beautiful environment will generate compliance to orders than a crowded, unorganized and faulty surrounding.

In spite of the above and more importantly because school plants are always in the state of depreciation due to age, use, wear and tear, it becomes imperative to institutional heads or the accredited representatives like Director, Works and Services Department in tertiary institutions to organize periodic and systematic inspection of school plant to identify areas needing repairs. It is germane to note that regular inspection and feedback should be a constant concern for all staff and students in a school to ensure prompt attention.

This stage is then followed by classification of repair needs to emergency and non-emergency grades. Electrical or plumbing fault cannot be left unattended to over a period because of its danger to life. Such is therefore classified as emergency.

It is thus expected that records of such repairs are kept indicating type of repair, cost and mode of completion, whether satisfactory or unsatisfactory. This record keeping should not be seen as a tool for witch-hunting but as a determinant for productivity and effectiveness of the Works and Services Department.

Promoting School Plant Maintenance for Effective Teaching and Learning

The importance of the school as a vehicle for transmission of culture and values from one generation to another cannot be overemphasized. Consequently, an effective introduction, sustenance and promotion of planned plant maintenance in the school would have an holding impact on a large segment of the society. This is because; the students would imbibe the value and transmit same to the larger society (Olagboye, 1998). It therefore becomes imperative for everyone concerned with education enterprise to encourage and promote plant maintenance in the school system.

In other words, instead of adopting what can be referred to as a fire-brigade approach, each tier of government should make it a point of duty to set aside, in its annual budget, certain amount specifically for plant maintenance and insurance cover. This is also expected of private or corporate owners of schools so as to ensure that every maintenance need in school plant is promptly attended to (Olagboye, 1998).

The institutional heads have been indexed as finally responsible for plant maintenance. In their custodial position therefore, they should ensure that the plant function optimally, are well protected and used for the primary purpose of setting it up in the first place. It is thus the responsibility of the Chief Executive of the institution to ensure retention of custodial staff in office, motivate and mobilize staff and students to accept and internalized plant maintenance culture as a value to live with.

The plant has been identified as necessary tools for effective teaching and learning to hold in the school. For the teacher to realize the mission in the school, Olagboye (1998) submitted that

the chief administrator should create a conducive atmosphere by:

- i. inculcating in the students and junior staff as well as colleagues the use and importance of plant maintenance;
- ii. taking stock of plant requiring repairs or servicing and promptly report same to appropriate authorities;
- iii. set rules and regulations for the use of school plant as guide; and
- iv. sanction report for immediate repair or replacement of any faulty component (p. 68).

Furthermore, proper maintenance of school helps to establish good character for an institution of learning. Such things as the trees and garden that define and enclose the outdoor spaces, the flower beds with roses and other varieties of flowers on which the bees and butterflies feed and buzz, help to beautify the environment.

Proper maintenance helps to assure safety of those occupying the school buildings. In as much as proper maintenance programme does not allow for dilapidated walls, leaking and weak roofs, as it also assures the safety of the occupants of such properly maintained buildings.

Moreover, proper maintenance helps to inculcate the habit of cleanliness ensures suitability of the school plants for continued use, especially when repairs and replacement of various school equipment are made, such equipment would always be in good order for continued use. More importantly, maintenance saves cost; and prevents the sudden collapse of any structure. Having highlighted the importance of school plant maintenance, it is therefore incumbent on the schools to cultivate the habit of proper maintenance culture.

School Plant Utilization

It is one thing to provide adequate and suitable school facilities but it is another thing to make effective use of them. The way and manner the school plant is utilized could determine the extent of benefit derived from the facilities in terms of degree to which school outcomes have been attained. According to Adeboyeje (2000), the concept of school plant utilization could be viewed from two perspectives. First, that utilization simply has to do with the process of interaction between the individual and the learning facilities available in the school environment. In another perspective, he defined school plant utilization as the degree to which school facilities have been put to effective use for the purpose of enhancing teaching and learning. This is a more comprehensive and adequate view, which points to the possibility that facilities could either be optimally utilized, under-utilized or over-utilized, but with attendant consequences on the attainment of school outcomes.

The target of every educational institution is to make effective use of available resources for attaining school outcomes. But the general problem seems to be that facilities in schools are either under-utilized or over utilized. But these two extremes have been found to be undesirable. Underutilization occurs when school facilities are not optimally used for the purpose for which they have been provided. This situation can arise either when fewer students are admitted in the face of proliferation of additional facilities or when existing facilities have not been fully stretched to their limit. Underutilization can lead to decay and rapid deterioration of buildings and facilities, which represents a colossal wastage of financial resources that has been expended in securing the facilities.

Sometimes however, the problem is that of over- utilization of limited facilities. In fact this appears to be a

greater problem in recent times in most Colleges of Education considering the fact that the economic constraints facing the nation have made it difficult for government to provide adequate school facilities not to talk of establishing additional facilities.

For instance, in Osun State College of Education, Ila-Orangun, which is the focus of this paper, School plant in terms of Lecture Halls are being over-utilized especially as it affects general courses such as Education and General Studies in Education (GSE).

Students are grouped into six major groups and fifteen sub-groups in proportion with their population and available accommodation facilities. Across the five schools in the college, there are six large halls for the purpose of these general courses as follows:

- (i). School of Arts and Social Sciences: - **Oyinlola Hall and Community Hall**
- (ii). School of Education: - **Oba Wahab Oyedotun Hall**
- (iii). School of Languages: - **Large Lecture Hall II**
- (iv). School of Vocational and Technical Education: - **Prof. Aboderin Hall**
- (v). School of Science: - **Dr. Olu Owolabi Hall**

For better clarification, highlighted below is detailed analysis and interpretation of the different groupings of 300 level students for Education and GSE courses:

	GROUP	STUDENT POP.	DEPARTMENT
1.	A,B,C,D,E	894	Accounting Student
2.	F	376	PES Students
3.	G	488	Agric, Fine Art, Technical and Home Economics Students
4.	H,I,J	717	Science Students
5.	K, L	208	Languages Students
6.	M, N, P	1,188	Art and Social Sciences Students

Hall	Capacity of the Hall	Group & Population	Remark
Oyinlola Hall	500	A,B,C,D,E (894)	Over-Utilization
Oba Wahab Oyedotun Hall	350	F (376)	Over-Utilization
L.L.H II	300	K,L (208)	Under-Utilization
Professor Aboderin Hall	500	G (488)	Under-Utilization
Dr. Olu Owolabi Hall	480	H,I,J (717)	Over-Utilization
Community Hall	700	M,N,P (1,188)	Over-Utilization

It is pertinent to stress that the Teacher Students Ratio (TSR) for Education and General Studies in Education is 1:25

Adeboyeje (2000) suggested that every school should aim at attaining optimum utilization of facilities for maximum benefits. This connotes a

maximal and effective use of available facilities in the process of teaching and learning. However, the school manager must be able to determine and calculate what constitutes optimum utilization of school plant. To do this, he must be guided by official provisions regulating the use of school structures and facilities. The

Federal Government of Nigeria (1981) recommended a teacher pupil ratio of 1:40 in the National Policy of Education. This means that a normal school classroom building should be able to accommodate at least 40 pupils conveniently. However, the ratio is exceeded in most schools, especially in urban areas. It also implies that a classroom that is significantly in excess of this figure is over-utilized, while the one that has a student population far below this figure is under-utilized.

Facilities can be utilized space wise and time wise. Thus, according to Ogonu (2000) and Ayoku (2005), popular methods used in the calculation of the utilization rate of school facilities include:

$$SUR = \frac{\text{Actual Number of pupils in class}}{\text{Theoretical Number of pupils}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

For instance, if the actual number of pupils attending a class is 50 and the officially approved number is 40, then the utilization rate is measured as:

$$SUR = \frac{50}{40} \times \frac{100}{1} = 125\%$$

Arising from the above example in Osun State College of Education, Ila-Orangun, the following statistical analysis is inferred:

1. Oyinlola Hall:	$\frac{894}{500} \times \frac{100}{1}$	= 179%
2. Oba WahabOyedotun Hall:	$\frac{376}{350} \times \frac{100}{1}$	= 107%
3. Large Lecture Hall II	$\frac{208}{300} \times \frac{100}{1}$	= 69%
4. Professor Aboderin Hall:	$\frac{488}{500} \times \frac{100}{1}$	= 98%
5. Dr. OluOwolabi Hall:	$\frac{717}{480} \times \frac{100}{1}$	= 149%
6. Community Hall:	$\frac{1,188}{700} \times \frac{100}{1}$	= 170%

UNESCO (2000), in Afful-Broni and Duodu (2013) stipulated that a utilization rate of 50%-100% is moderate utilization and that any utilization above 100% is considered as over utilization, and that utilization rates below 50% are under-utilization. This means that four of the above listed halls are actually over utilized space wise, while two; the Large Lecture Hall and Prof. Aboderin Hall with 69% and

98% respectively were not put into maximum use.

The implications of the above scenario are overcrowding, stress, unruly behaviour and distractions among others. Little wonder then, Okebukola (2002) and Ajayi (2007) affirmed that effective teaching and learning process cannot be guaranteed with inadequate or over-utilized facilities.

The finding confirms Adeboyeje (1994) definition of over utilization as a condition where there is excess pressure on the use of school facilities in the face of acute shortage. This portends a situation where many more learners are admitted into a school without a corresponding increase in school facilities to match the excess demand, leading to a situation where the elasticity of existing facilities is overstretched beyond limits

From the above, it is obvious that existing facilities in the College are being over-utilized in most cases. In the last few years, the College has witnessed exponential increase in students' yearly enrolment without corresponding expansion in facilities, equipment and material resources which has resulted in the gradual collapse of education system at this level.

Among other various problems of facilities noticed in the College are:

- i. Shortage of conducive offices for staff
- ii. Inadequate classrooms
- iii. Inadequate laboratory facilities
- iv. Epileptic supply of electricity
- v. Inadequate water supply
- vi. Lack of good road network
- vii. Lack of information network services
- viii. Lack of matching facilities with students enrolment
- ix. Poor administration of facilities
- x. Lack of repairs to the damaged facilities
- xi. Vandalization of facilities during students' crises
- xii. Poor maintenance culture.

A visit to the science laboratories of the College revealed that some of the laboratories were dusty; bottles of chemicals were left open on the benches unlabelled. In addition, the few cupboards had suffered leaks and were dismantled and it was doubtful if any practical work

could go on under such conditions. Even the microscopes were in a very poor state with mould on the lenses.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the above, it is obvious that existing facilities in the College are being over-utilized in most cases. This may not be appropriate enough for effective teaching and learning. The school facilities are the important tools for teaching and learning. If school facilities are provided but not managed, it would result to wastage, underutilization or damage and this will not enhance teachers' productivity and achievement of school goals and objectives. Therefore, adequate provision of facilities and proper maintenance of these facilities enhance teachers' quality performance and productivity.

Consequently, it is hereby recommended that government should provide adequate school facilities as well as make funds available for the College for the provision of needed facilities.

While it is important for the school authority to give consideration to existing facilities during admission process, a large class could be divided into two groups, and hours of lectures shared between the groups.

Educational planners, government and philanthropists should see to the well-being of the college, because the output of the school system determines the future of the societies.

Physical facilities' maintenance should be part of the orientation programme given to students, staff and administrators in the educational system.

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