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14



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. AIR QUALITY OF DIFFERENT LAND USES IN A RURAL AREA (DOBI), GWAGWALADA AREA COUNCIL, FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, NIGERIA I. I. Abbas and O.L. Abejide	1-15
2. EFFECTS OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE ON THE LIVELIHOOD OF WOMEN FARMERS IN LAFIA, NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA Dr. Mrs Mary Agbo and Mrs. Veronica Luper Viashima	16-28
3. ASSESSMENT OF URBAN HEAT ISLAND USING REMOTE SENSING AND GIS TECHNIQUES IN JOS METROPOLIS, NIGERIA Wuyep Solomon Zitta and Samuel Akintayo Akinseye	29-40
4. TREND ANALYSIS OF RAINFALL AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR FLOODING IN MAKURDI DRAINAGE BASIN, BENUE STATE, NIGERIA Oyatayo, K.T., Ndabula, C., Abaje, I.B., Jidauna, G.G. Iwan, M.T., Mshelia, A.M.	41-58
5. PUBLIC PERCEPTION ON THE ALMAJIRI SYSTEM AND PRACTICES IN SOME URBAN AREAS OF KATSINA STATE Yecho, Jacob I.; Abdurraheem, Anifat; Ilim, Moses Msughter and Amali Suleiman	59-69
6. IMPACT OF HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT ON ECONOMIC GROWTH IN NIGERIA Kyarem Richard N, Felix Emmanuel Dodo, Sani Umar and Sale Mohammed	70-80
7. A LANDUSE-BASED ASSESSMENT OF WATER QUALITY FOR URBAN IRRIGATION ALONG SALANTA FLUVIAL REACHES IN KANO, KANO STATE Umar Shehu Sarki, Amir Abdulazeez and Abubakar Ibrahim Tukur	81-95
8. SIXTY YEARS OF NIGERIA'S AFROCENTRIC FOREIGN POLICY: ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD Dimas Garba	96-107
9. ASSESSMENT OF AWARENESS LEVEL AND PRACTICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AMONG STUDENTS IN ILORIN, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA Malik, N.A., Yahaya, O.Y. and Ogunleye, E.F.	108-117
10. MACROECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF NON-PERFORMING LOANS: EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF DEPOSIT MONEY BANKS IN NIGERIA KEVIN, Diltokka Gideon, GYONG, Yerima Emmanuel	118-128
11. TRENDS IN DRY-SPELL DAYS AND RAINFALL ANOMALIES IN JOS SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA Nnachi Solomon Uduma, Ikpe Elisha, Philemon Albert Chinda, Udeh Ejeh Lawrence	129-142



12. ASSESSMENT OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE INCREASING
HERDERS-CROP FARMERS' CONFLICTS IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA
Jeje, O. G. and Idoma Kim 143-152
13. FARMERS-HERDERS CRISIS IN NIGERIA: THE NEED FOR GRASSROOTS
PARTICIPATORY APPROACH
Zasha Tersoo Zasha and Justine Thomas 153-160
14. OFFICIAL CORRUPTION AND THE NIGERIAN ELITES: APPLYING THE
THEORY OF DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION
Zumve, Iornienge Samuel (Ph.D.) and Moukhtar, Muhammad Idris (Ph.D) 161-172
15. EFFECT OF MINING ACTIVITIES ON THE LIVELIHOOD OF HOUSEHOLDS IN
NISAMA COMMUNITY IN JEMA'A LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF
KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA
Dangiwa, Elisha Yari (PhD), Kambai, Elizabeth Peter, Adamu, Peter (PhD) and Saidu,
Salihu 173-181
- 16 FISCAL POLICY AND MACROECONOMIC PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIA: A
STRUCTURAL VECTOR AUTOREGRESSIVE APPROACH
Abdulsalam S. Ademola, Abdullahi Badiru, and Zulaihatu A. Zubair 182-197



ASSESSMENT OF AWARENESS LEVEL AND PRACTICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AMONG STUDENTS IN ILORIN, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Environmental problems have attracted attention of individuals, organizations and governments all over the world. The increase in environmental concerns had continued to highlight the influential factors on environmental protection such as environmental behaviour, awareness, knowledge and attitude. This study assesses the level of awareness and practice of environmental management in public schools in Ilorin. Six (6) public schools representing 12% were randomly selected from a total of fifty schools. Three hundred and twelve (312) copies of questionnaire were administered to respondents using Taro Yamane Formula of determining sample size. The administration of questionnaire was done through a random sampling technique. The result showed that 34%, 31% and 35% of the respondents had high, moderate and low level of awareness on environmental management. Furthermore, the major environmental problems identified by respondents in the sampled school indicated that bad toilets, indiscriminate urination in public places, burning of waste in open spaces ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively with a mean weighted score of 2.62, 2.61 and 2.53 respectively. More so, 81% of the public schools sampled indicated that they perform weekly sanitation with 94% of the students participating in the sanitation. The study therefore recommends that proper environmental management habit of the respondents in public schools should be sustained and eradicates such habits of burning waste, indiscriminate urination in open spaces among others.

Keywords: environment, public schools, management, protection and challenges

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1970s, environmental problems in most nations of the world have attracted the attention of individuals, organizations and governments. Therefore, both developed and developing countries of the world tend to emphasize on the creation of environmentally literate society so as to sustain life on this planet (Fekede, 2005). Environmental literacy holds the key and gives window of hope for repairing the damage done to our earth caused by little knowledge. Environmental awareness can be achieved through planned learning programmes, which would impart knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in order to develop responsible lifestyles that would be in harmony with the environment (Shobeiri, 2005).

Environmental awareness which became more prominent in the 1960s has continued to play a significant role in strengthening people's development of values, attitudes, perceptions and behaviour towards the environment. Environmental awareness programmes therefore, become indispensable in the quest to formulate mitigation measures to reduce environmental degradation in the whole world (Sewall, 1995). Hence, Young (2002) indicate that public environmental awareness through educational programmes is a significant and essential step towards the promotion of sustainable development. Because of the significance of environmental awareness towards achieving the concept of sustainable development, many studies and programmes have been embarked upon across the world. Environmental education has a crucial role to play in building an



encouraging social context for sustainable development and in empowering citizens to support business and policy makers to hasten the transition to sustainability (UNEP, 2007). Developing awareness and understanding how the environment is working is believed to provide a range of sense of responsibility for its protection and concern. It is also considered an effective vehicle to persuade human being to adopt rational attitudes towards the natural environment and to avoid unwise exploitation and misuse of natural environment (Ahmedin, 2013). To this end, all nations are incorporating the theme of environment education and sustainable development in their education system. It is through education that environmental knowledge, skill and attitude of human beings can be changed and the concern and care for the environment is raised (UNESCO, 1991).

The value of environmental education minimizes the destruction of the environment and highlights the necessary steps to help and save the environment. This goes logically through teaching of environmental management in schools. Globally, most public schools are facing a high level of pollution. The situation in less-developing countries such as Nigeria is more acute, partly because of the lack of adequate knowledge of environmental management and people's negative attitude towards the environment (Adeolu, Enesi and Adeolu, 2014). There is strong evidence which suggests that individual or group awareness and attitudes towards environmental management is critical in the effort to respond to the environmental challenges (Kofoworola, 2007).

The awareness, attitudes and behaviour of people in the community are crucial to environmental management. Reasons for individual participation in environmental management are related to environmental motivation, social pressures, attitudes and economic incentives (Bartlett, 2005). Environmental attitude of young people appears to be crucial as they ultimately play a direct role in providing knowledge-based solutions to incoming environmental problems (Evans, Gill and Marchant, 1996). School environmental programmes, although addressed to students if properly channel can also influence the environmental knowledge, attitude and behaviour of adults (parents, teachers and local community members) through the process of intergenerational influence (Evans, et al., 1996). The knowledge of environmental management will enable students to manage their environment properly. Furthermore, the effective implementation of environmental management in schools as a regular part of the curriculum and school management practices could increase public environmental management and demonstrate a commitment to environmental protection.

The aim of the paper study is to assess the level of awareness and practice of environmental management among students in public schools in Ilorin. The specific objectives are to assess students' awareness and practice of environmental management in Ilorin; determine the factors that influence student's awareness and practice of environmental management; examine the attitude of the students towards environmental management; and assess the level of participation of student in environmental activities.

STUDY AREA

Ilorin is located between Latitudes $8^{\circ}24'$ and $8^{\circ}36'$ North of the Equator and between Longitudes $4^{\circ}10'$ and $4^{\circ}36'$ East of the Greenwich Meridian. It has land area of about 468 km^2 (Figure 1). Ilorin is bounded in the north by Moro Local Government Area (LGA), in the east by Ifelodun LGA, in the west by Asa LGA and in the south by Asa and Ifelodun LGAs respectively. The socio-economic activities in Ilorin were predominantly characterized by traditional craft among which are weaving, carving, pottery, and blacksmithing. Today however, the scope of economy has expanded tremendously to include other activities like furniture making, bread making, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, etc. Patches of 'urban farming' are also found in the parts of the city where vegetables, maize, millet, cassava and yams are cultivated. Forest lands are being cleared in the process of building activities to accommodate the increasing population. Ilorin has a number of

primary and secondary schools as well as tertiary institutions which includes University of Ilorin, Kwara State Polytechnic, Kwara State University, College of Education, Crown Hill University and Al-Hikmah University.

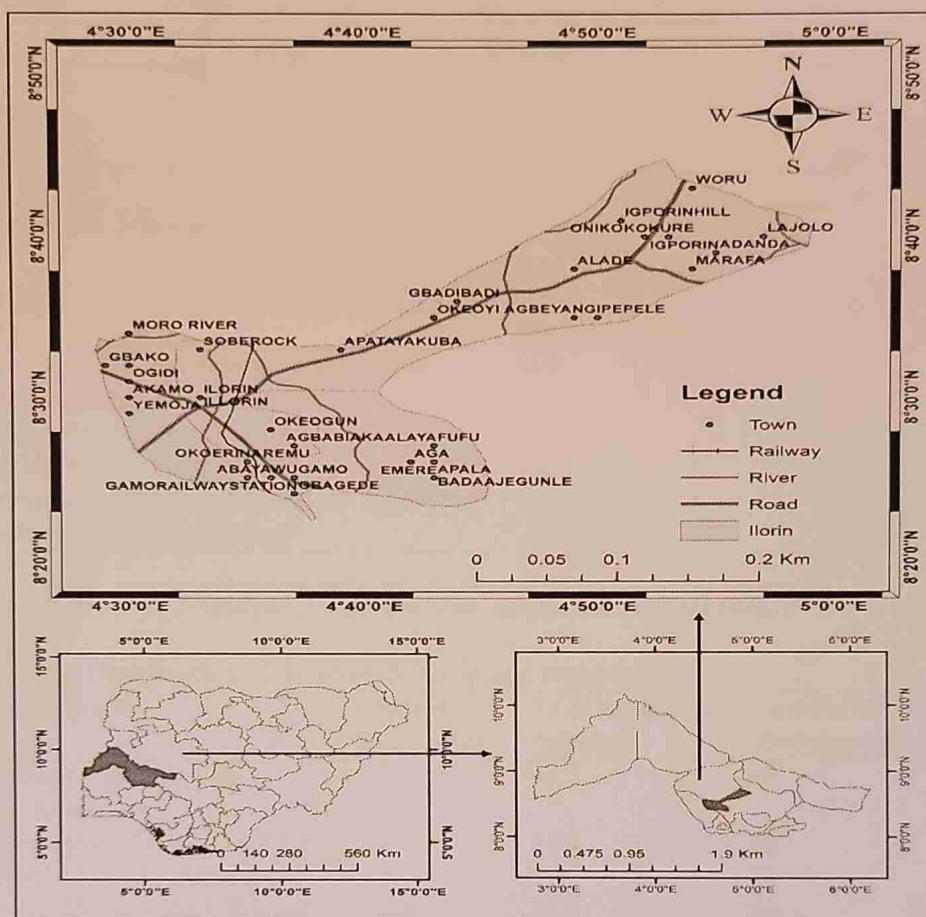


Figure 1: Ilorin showing Location of sampled Schools; Inset: Nigeria showing Kwara
Source: Ministry of Lands and Housing, 2018.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data required and used for this study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The data required include: student population of the selected schools, level of respondents' participation in environmental management and attitudes of respondents towards environmental management. The primary data was collected through the administration of 312 copies of questionnaire to the respondents. The secondary data collected include: the map of Ilorin from Ministry of Lands and Housing, population of students from the administrative offices of the selected schools. Two public schools were randomly selected from each of the three local government areas (Ilorin West, Ilorin South and Ilorin East) that make up the study area so as to have equal representation of samples. This represents 12% of the total fifty schools found in the study area which is in line with the minimum sample size of 10% for social research. A total sample size of 312 respondents was derived from the total population of students in the selected schools using Taro Yamane (1973) formula with 95% confidence level. The calculation formula is presented as $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$ where n = sample size required; N = number of total population; and e = allowable error (%) (See tables 1, 2

and 3). The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics including tables, cross tabulations, graphs and Mean Weighted Score.

Table 1: Distribution of Schools in the Study Area

S/N	Local Government Area	Number of Schools	Number of Schools Selected
1	Ilorin South	17	2
2	Ilorin West	18	2
3	Ilorin east	15	2
	Total	50	6

Source: Kwara State Ministry of Education, 2019.

Table 2: Students' Enrolment in Selected Public Schools

S/N	Schools	Students' Enrolment
1	Government Day Secondary School Tanke	814
2	Ecwa Secondary School, Oja Iya	751
3	Saint James Secondary School	324
4	Bishop Smith Secondary School	1451
5	Cherubim and Seraphim Secondary School	805
6	St. Anthony Secondary School	1123
	Total	5628

Source: Office of the Vice Principal Administration of the selected schools, 2019.

Table 3: Students' Distribution of Selected Schools and Sample Size

S/N	Name of Schools	Students' Enrolment	% of Students Selected	Number of Students Selected
1	Government Day Secondary School Tanke	814	14.5	46
2	Ecwa Secondary School, Oja-Iya	751	13.4	42
3	Saint James Secondary School	324	5.7	18
4	Bishop Smith Secondary School	1451	25.8	80
5	C and S Secondary School	805	14.3	44
6	St Anthony Secondary School	1123	26.3	82
	Total	5628	100	312

Source: Author's Computation, 2019.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic characteristics of the respondents as contained in table 4 shows that 160 (51%) are males while 152 (49%) are females. Furthermore, 92 (29%) are in junior secondary school (JSS) II, 152 (49%) are in senior secondary school (SSS) I, 60 (19%) are in senior secondary school II while 8 (3%) are in senior secondary school III. This indicates that majority (71%) of the students' respondents are in senior secondary class. The reasons for a higher number of respondents in the senior secondary school is that these set of students awareness on environmental management might be better than those in junior secondary school because of the relatively higher number of stay in schools coupled with their exposure to some subjects such as Geography, History and Civic Education that are related to environmental management issues at that level. Junior secondary school I students are not picked due to their first year in school and Junior secondary school III students have finished their examination and were not in school at the time of this research.

Table 4: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Socio economic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	160	51
Female	152	49
Total	312	100
Class		
JSS II	92	29
SSS I	152	49
SSS II	60	19
SS III	8	3
Total	312	100
Age		
9-11years	26	8
12-14years	164	53
15-17years	94	30
Above 17years	28	9
Total	312	100
Religion		
Christianity	220	71
Islam	92	29
Total	312	100

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2019.

The age characteristics of respondents showed that 26 (8%), 164 (53%), 94 (30%) are within the age of 9-11years, 12-14years, 15-17years respectively (Table 4). This indicates that why students in JSS II fall within the age bracket 9-11years, those in SSS were from 12 years and above. This reflects the typical age brackets of students in JSS and SSS classes in almost every society in Nigeria. Also, 220 (71%) of the respondents are Christians while 92 (29%) are Muslims. This indicate that majority of the schools selected are populated by Christians. The high rate of population of students by Christians might be connected to the fact that all the selected schools except Government Day Secondary School Tanke were founded by Christian missionaries and later handed over to government in the 1970's for their administration.

Level of Perception and Awareness to Environmental Terms/Concept

The respondents' level of awareness to environmental terms/concepts as shown in Table 5 reveals that the most familiar terms or concepts are environment, pollution and soil erosion which are ranked first, second and third most conversant terms respectively. However, other terms such as green energy, endangered species, ozone layer depletion, and acid rain were far from students' perception and comprehension and are ranked the least with 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th respectively. This implies that majority of the students are aware of the most frequent used environmental concepts that form part of their class study in schools. The high level of awareness of the highly ranked terms might be connected to the fact that most of these students have had reasons to hear and study the 'environment' while 'pollution' and 'soil erosion' had been experienced by them at a particular period of their life. On the other hand, the low level of awareness of the lowest ranked terms might be connected to the fact that most of these terms do not form focus of discussion in the school curricular at these levels and are not in the lips of students.

Table 5: Respondents' Level of Perception and Awareness to Environmental Terms

Environmental Terms	Not aware	Slightly aware	Fully aware	Mean Weight Score (MWS)	Rank
Environment	20	92	200	2.58	1
Waste recycling	74	108	130	2.18	7
Water catchment	104	116	92	1.96	12
Endangered species	98	120	94	1.99	11
Sewage system	60	90	162	2.32	6
Waste	60	68	184	2.33	5
Pollution	48	72	192	2.53	2
Green energy	156	102	54	1.67	13
Acid rain	172	86	54	1.30	14
Deforestation	90	98	124	2.10	10
Climate change	82	92	138	2.17	8
Ozone layer depletion	118	88	106	1.96	12
Flooding	68	56	188	2.45	4
Soil erosion	32	90	190	2.51	3
Population explosion	88	87	137	2.16	9

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2019.

Furthermore, Figure 2 shows the results of students' awareness or practice of environmental management. The figure revealed that 34% of the respondents had high level of awareness about environmental management, 31% agreed that they have moderate awareness level about environmental management while 35% of the respondents revealed that their level of awareness is very low. This implies that majority of the respondents have knowledge about the management of the environment as they have been involved in cleaning and preservation of the school environment.

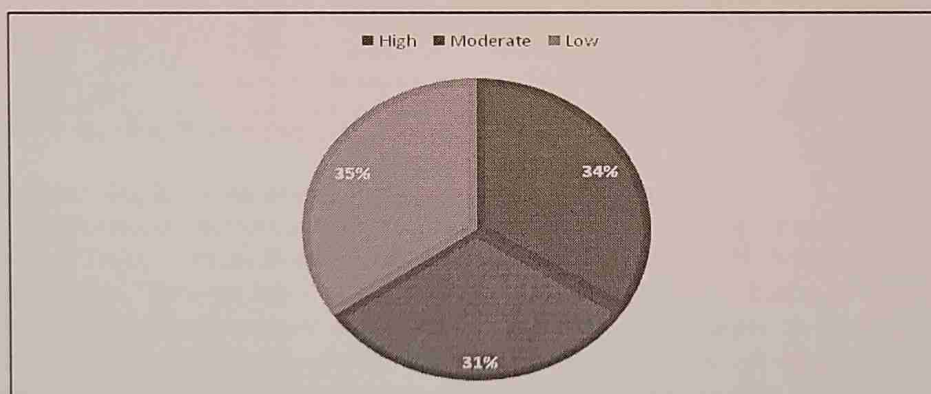


Figure 2: Level of Awareness of Respondents to Environmental Management

Environmental Challenges in Public Schools

The respondents were asked to indicate the environmental challenges confronting the selected schools. The result in Table 6 revealed that bad toilets in the school are ranked the first most challenges encountered by the students while odour emanating from student's urine in open spaces was ranked second. This implies that students were forced to use open space for urination due to the bad state of available toilets. Furthermore, burning of waste in open spaces and indiscriminate littering of the school environment were among other environmental challenges. While open space burning of wastes is ranked third, indiscriminate littering happens to be the fourth ranked environmental challenges of the selected schools

Table 6: Responses on Environmental challenges in Schools

Challenges	Not often	Sometime s	Often n	Very often	MWS	Rank
Indiscriminate littering	98	112	42	60	2.21	4
Unkempt grass and hedges	120	80	54	58	2.16	5
Burning of waste openly	66	92	70	82	2.53	3
Public urination	92	50	58	112	2.61	2
Damaged water pipes	200	50	20	42	1.69	6
Bad toilets	104	52	16	140	2.62	1

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2019.

Methods of Waste Disposal in Public Secondary Schools

The results as contained in Figure 3 shows that 4% of the respondents agreed that waste is disposed in the school by incineration, 8% through government provided trucks, while 9% indicated open spaces as method of disposal. However, majority (79%) of the respondents opined that waste is disposed by burning. This implies waste disposal method adopted in most of these schools were not environmental friendly.

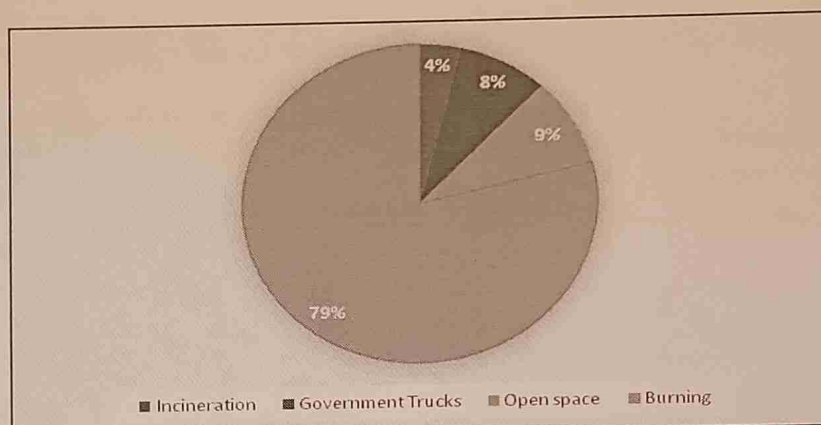


Figure 3: Waste Disposal Method in Selected Schools

Factors Influencing Environmental Management and Practice

The factors influencing environmental management and practices among the students were sought. The results of Table 7 revealed that neighborhood influence (ranked first) is the most important among the factors. This implies that the respondents' place of abode has a great influence on his/her environmental management and practices capability. While students from densely inner core of the city display bad environmental practice, those from the reserved areas are moderate and environmental management compliant. It concurs with the environmentalism school of thought that asserted that the environment where a person resides dictates its action. Furthermore, the increase awareness of respondents through some of the environmental issues being taught in the school curriculum also influences the respondent's management ability of the environment as it is ranked second. In the same vein, socio-economic status, age group and gender which ranked third, fifth and sixth respectively were part of the influential factors. Gender is the least factor that influences student's environmental management practices. By implication, masculine or feminine gender has little influence on the effective management of the environment and it follows that it is the duty of all to preserve the environment as embedded in goal of environmental sustainability of Millennium Development Goal.

Table 7: Factors Influencing Environmental Management and Practices

Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	MWS	Rank
Parental Influence	128	100	20	38	26	3.85	4
Self-efficacy	106	120	42	32	12	3.88	2
Other sources	86	120	42	24	40	3.60	7
Gender	98	108	38	48	20	3.69	6
Socioeconomic status	100	118	60	20	14	3.87	3
School curriculum	112	114	34	40	12	3.88	2
Age/Grade	98	114	44	36	20	3.75	5
Neighborhood Influence	128	108	38	20	18	3.99	1

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2019.

Perception of Respondents towards Environmental Issues

The results of perception of the respondents on environmental issues are contained in table 8. The findings as revealed in table 7 showed that majority of the respondents agreed that the management of the environment should be the responsibility of everyone as it was ranked first. This implies that they are aware of the need to manage the environment in an efficient and sustainable manner.

Table 8: Perception of Respondents on Environmental Issues

Environmental Issues	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	MWS	Rank
Environmental cleanliness is the responsibility of the government alone	34	48	18	142	70	2.47	5
Cleanliness of the environment is the responsibility of everybody	172	90	4	8	34	4.11	1
Indiscriminate dumping of refuse in drainages is bad for the environment	104	78	18	64	48	3.40	3
Use of firewood leads to deforestation and damaged the environment	94	104	30	36	48	3.51	2
Environmental education is not as important as any other curriculum in school	44	58	54	98	58	2.78	4

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2019

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Environmental education is not as important as any other curriculum in school	44	58	54	98	58	2.78	4

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2019

The opinion expressed by the respondents is a reflection of their level of awareness on some key environmental terms such as pollution, erosion, sanitation among others. In the same vein, majority of the respondents are of the view that the duty of keeping the environment clean should not be the duty of the government alone as it ranked fifth. Furthermore, the respondents also agreed that the continuous use of firewood often leads to deforestation and cause damage to the environment and this was ranked 2nd while indiscriminate dumping of refuse into the environment ranked third. The findings showed that the respondents are fully aware of the best environmental management practices which might be directly a consequence of the failure of human to effectively and efficiently manage the environment.

Participation in Environmental Activities

The analysis in Figure 4 indicated that 81% of the respondents agreed that environmental sanitation is carried out in the school weekly, 7% claimed that it is twice a month while 6% affirmed that it is performed monthly and another 6% is of the view that it is not performed at all. This implies that majority of the schools in the area conduct weekly sanitation of the school environment.

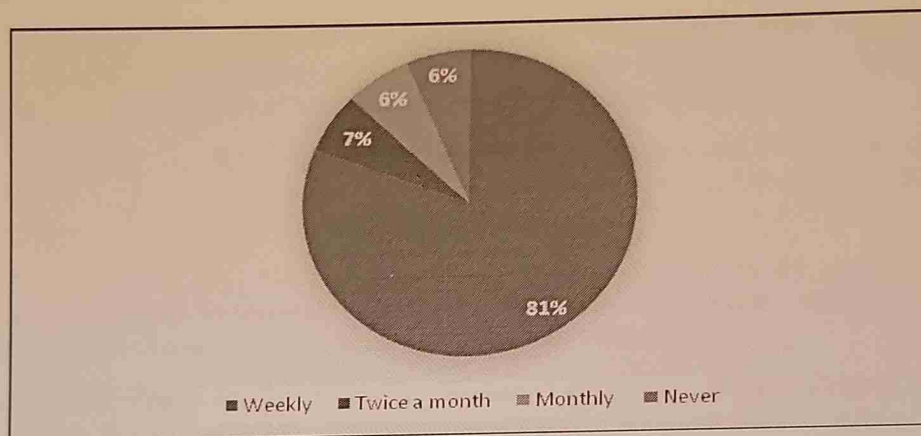


Figure 4: Participation in Sanitation Activities

For the students participation in environmental sanitation activities, Figure 5 shows that 39% of the students that do partake in environmental sanitation get involved in sweeping the classes, 34% are for cutting grasses, 19% pick up litters, 4% wash the toilets while 4% exempt themselves from participation in the sanitation of the school environment.

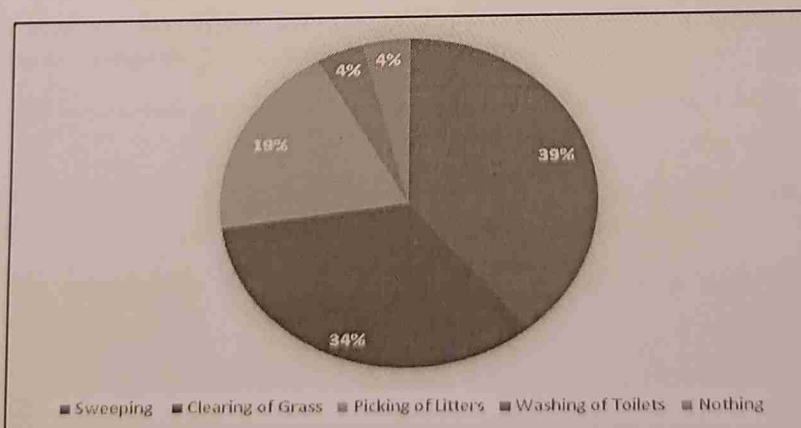


Figure 5: Environmental Activities engaged in school



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The environment is the home of man and must be protected. In doing so, environmental management in public schools must be encouraged and practiced in order to imbibe the culture of environmental preservation in the young generation. Schools in the study area teach and practice environmental management at various capacities. Also, majority of the respondents have good attitude towards environmental management and they participate in keeping the environment clean at home and in school. It is therefore recommended that environmentally friendly activities should be further encouraged, sustained and replicated in other parts of the state and beyond to ensure sustainable environment that guaranteed meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the future generation from meeting their own needs.

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