

TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT OF THE LEVEL OF HEAD-TEACHERS' LEARNING ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KATSINA STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated teachers' assessment of the level of head-teacher's learning environment management public primary schools in Katsina state, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study found that Katsina state government does not organised regular training and retraining of head-teachers so as to update their leadership, knowledge, managerial skills to cope with the school administrative challenges. One in research question was formulated to guide the study. The population for this study consisted of the 28,919 teachers, drawn from 2,353 public primary schools in Katsina state. A sample of 24 public primary schools and 204 teachers from all the 2,353 public primary schools in Katsina state was purposively selected for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire containing 22 items structured on a four-point rating scale. The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to determine the level of head-teachers' school learning environment management in public primary schools in Katsina state, Nigeria or otherwise. The study recommend that regular training and retraining of head-teachers so as to update their leadership, knowledge, managerial skills and general school management to cope with the school administrative challenges.

Keywords: Teacher, assessment, head-teacher, learning environment, management,

Introduction

The head-teacher's learning environment management on students' academic achievement is a significant aspect of school leadership. A head-teacher's role in managing the learning environment can have a direct impact on students' achievement, engagement and the overall students' educational experiences. Creating a supportive, inclusive and stimulating learning environment, head-teacher can foster an atmosphere that encourages student success and academic growth.

Head-teachers, as Chief Executives officer that rises through the ranks of the head-teacher at the primary school level of education are vested with the authority and influence for the day-to-day management of teaching and learning as well as the general administration of the school. His position is important in the entire school process and for achieving high educational outcomes. The head-teachers' administrative knowledge, skills, competence, practices and leadership styles and abilities determine the extent the schools can achieve the set educational goals and objectives. Zapeda (2004) opines that effective head-teacher demonstrates the ability to lead staff and students in achieving school educational and extra-curricular growth and betterment, especially in the area of school

learning environment management.

Charles and Caroline (2018) argues that the weak performance often experienced in primary schools today could be connected to lack of fundamental infrastructure and facilities. In public primary schools, the government provides some of the primary school learning environment but head-teachers are in the habit of lookwarm attitude to ensure that facilities and learning environment are well managed and utilised. Primary school learning environment management is the process of planning, organising, coordinating and controlling material and physical resources for effective teaching and learning processes in schools. Effective management of primary school learning environment is important for the success of educational programme depends solely on management of school's facilities and the general learning environment in terms of planning for provision, maintenance and monitoring of proper utilisation Zapeda (2004).

Primary school head-teacher refers to the leadership role of a senior teacher responsible for overseeing the daily operations, academic performance and overall well-being of a primary school. The head-teacher plays a crucial role in shaping the educational activities as well as the school environment or the school plant, ensuring that the school meets its set objectives and fostering a positive learning environment and experiences for the students.

According to Ahmad (2023), head-teacher is the academic leader whose responsibility is to ensure the school meets its academic goals by setting high standards, monitoring students' academic performance and implementing effective teaching strategies. He oversees the school budget, managing financial resources and ensuring the school remains fiscally responsible. He collaborates with his teachers to develop and implement a comprehensive curriculum that meets the needs of divers learners, facilitates parent-teacher relationships, establishing and maintaining open communication with parents, addressing concerns and involving them in the school educational processes.

A primary school head-teacher plays a significant role in school management, ensuring that the school operates effectively and efficiently, providing a high-quality education for students and fostering a positive leaning environment for all. Primary school head-teacher also is responsible for school improvement continuously evaluating the school performance, identifying areas for improvement and implementing strategies to address those needs. He builds community engagement, maintaining relationships with the local community, business and other education stakeholders to support the school's mission and goals (Ahmad, 2021). He ensures compliance that is ensuring that the school complies with all relevant education laws, regulations, accreditation requirements, school discipline and safety establishing and enforcing policies and procedures to maintain a safe and respectful learning environment.

The primary school learning environment is physical, social and emotional spaces where young students engage in educational activities. A well-designed learning environment is essential for fostering cognitive development, social skills and a love for learning. Primary school learning environment are crucial components of education that influence students' academic achievement, social development and the overall well-being of the students. It is essential to create and manage a learning environment that is safe, engaging and supportive of all students (Ahmad, 2023). Learning environment refers to the sum total of the educational facilities provided in schools to enhance the implementation of educational programmes. They include material and physical resources such as school sites, school buildings, equipment, machines, laboratories, white boards, and others. Isma'il (2019) opines that school learning environment as space interpretation of the school curriculum. Without physical facilities, curriculum interpretation through effective teaching and learning will be

difficult.

Primary school learning environment management refers to the strategic planning, organisation, coordinating, controlling, supervising, maintaining, implementation and evaluating of a well-designed, inclusive and stimulating environment that supports and enhances learning and development. A primary school learning environment should be safe, engaging and conducive to the academic, emotional and social growth of the young learners. Creating a conducive learning environment that is inclusive and accommodating for all students with diverse needs, including those with learning disabilities by providing necessary support accommodation and creates a supportive and engaging learning community (Murphy, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

There has been a growing concern by teachers, parents, researchers and other members of the public about lack of effective management of primary school learning environment in public primary schools in Katsina state as a whole. Well managed learning environment will improve students' academic performance and effective school facility management through adequate and proper school plant management cannot be overemphasised (Isma'il, 2019). Though, Government has done a lot to equip public primary schools through several programmes. However, there is lack of proper management culture from the head-teachers. Some facilities are not well managed/repared to aid teaching and learning activities. There is a problem of established school learning environment operations and maintenance practices by the head-teachers in public primary schools especially in Katsina state, Nigeria. These established operations, maintenance practices are not exercised in most public primary schools in Katsina state, Nigeria (Ahmad, 2023). This common phenomenal occurrence necessitated the need to examine the level of teachers' assessment of head-teachers' school learning environment management in public primary schools in Katsina state, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to find out the teachers' assessment of head-teachers' school learning environment management in Katsina state public primary schools. Specifically, the study set out to determine:

1. The level of head-teachers' school learning environment management in Katsina state public primary schools.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the level of head-teachers' school learning environment management in Katsina state public primary schools?

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population for the study consisted of the 28,919 teachers in Katsina state which was drawn from 2,353 public primary schools. A sample of 24 public primary schools and 204 teachers from all the 2,353 public primary schools in Katsina state was purposively selected for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire containing 22 items structured on a four-point rating scale was used to elicit information from teachers/respondents for data collection. Data generated from the respondents were analysed using mean and standard deviation to determine the level of head-teachers' school learning environment management in public primary schools in Katsina state, Nigeria or otherwise. The

content validity of the instrument was established by subjecting the instrument to criticism of experts in Educational Administration and Planning as well as Educational Measurement and Evaluation. The experts judged how the items in the instrument truly represent the content and specific objectives the topic sets to achieve. The experts judged the items in terms of content relevance, content coverage and content clarity of language and wordings. The reliability of the instrument was determined through pilot testing as the researcher sampled 40 teachers were randomly from selected seven departments and units who were not among the sampled staff and students for the study using the same instrument. The validity index of 0.87% was obtained. The obtained data were analysed using mean scores, standard deviations and simple percentages.

Results

In this section, means and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions raised for the study. Results are shown in table 1.

Research Question 1: What is the level of head-teachers’ school learning environment management in Katsina state public primary schools?

Means and standard deviations were used to answer the research question raised for the study. Result is shown in the table below:

Table 1: Level of head-teachers’ school learning environment in Katsina state public primary schools.

S/N	Item Statements	X	SD	Decision
1.	Primary schools have good school landscape.	2.67	0.56	Effectively managed
2.	There are adequate and well equipped resource rooms.	2.49	0.59	Not well managed
3.	The school has clean toilets and latrines facilities	2.59	0.65	effectively managed
4.	There is provision for conducive indoor and outdoor teaching and learning environments.	2.64	0.57	effectively managed
5.	Our school library has adequate relevant books, with fully internet connected and has sufficient sitting arrangement for enough students.	2.01	0.58	Not well managed
6.	Extracurricular facilities are properly managed for sporting activities.	2.72	0.54	effectively managed
7.	There are well furnished and ventilated classrooms	2.65	0.54	effectively managed
8.	There are furniture and equipment in the school.	2.52	0.63	effectively managed
9.	Outdoor spaces: school yards, playgrounds on the school compound.	2.40	0.68	Not well managed
10.	School buildings and layout are properly managed.	2.66	0.63	effectively managed
11.	School technological tools are properly positioned, functional and maintained.	2.48	0.58	Not well managed
12.	Recreational centre/gardens functional and well managed	2.23	0.51	Not well managed
13.	There is a functional school garden.	2.52	0.70	effectively managed
14.	Access road and labeled parking space are strategically positioned and well managed.	2.58	0.63	effectively managed
15.	There is a well managed Early-child hood centre	2.62	0.61	effectively managed
16.	Head-teachers’ school learning environment maintenance practices.	2.55	0.61	effectively managed
17.	State government organised regular training and retraining of head-teachers so as to update their	2.34	0.52	Not promptly organised

	leadership, knowledge, managerial skills and general school management to cope with the school administrative challenges.			
18.	Head-teacher communicates and collaborates with teachers; other stakeholders in the day-to-day administration of the school particularly the school learning environment management.	2.15	0.57	Poor communication and collaboration
19.	Head-teacher established committee for school learning environment management.	2.45	0.58	Not supervised
20.	Head-teachers are appointed based on merit.	1.50	0.36	Appointment not on merit
21.	Teachers support the head-teacher in the management of school learning environment.	2.50	0.60	effectively managed
22.	There is enough enlightenment campaign/workshop s/training and re-retraining and conferences on school learning environment management.	1.55	0.37	Not constant

Discussion

Analysis of data presented in table 1 above shows that all except items 2, 5, 9, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19 and 22 were considered to be not well managed. This is because their means are below the baseline mean of 2.5 established as a criterion for the determination of the head-teachers' school learning environment management in Katsina state public primary schools, Nigeria. The head-teachers' level of school learning environment management is considered effectively managed were: primary schools have good school landscape with 2.67; the school has clean toilets and latrines facilities with 2.59; There is provision for conducive indoor and outdoor teaching and learning environments with 2.64; extracurricular facilities are properly managed for sporting activities with 2.72; well furnished and ventilated classrooms 2.65; there are furniture and equipment in the school with 2.52; school buildings and layout are properly managed with 2.66; There is a functional school garden with 2.52; access road and labeled parking space are strategically positioned and well managed with 2.58; there is a well managed Early-child hood centre with mean of 2.62, head-teachers' school learning environment maintenance practices with 2.55. From the result above, it's can be deduced that the level of head-teachers' school learning environment management in Katsina state public primary schools, Nigeria is low

However, other head-teachers' learning environment managerial strategies as identified by teachers included extracurricular facilities are properly managed for sporting activities and primary schools have good school landscape. These head-teachers' learning environment managerial level happened to be in agreement with that of Msila, (2022) and Yaqub, (2014). The findings of the study are also consistent with established best practices for effective school management world over. Adedeji (2012) identified some of the qualities of an effective head-teacher to include among others providing conducive school learning environment management for both staff and students.

This study found that head-teachers normally assign teachers to supervise cleanliness of school learning environment management, aesthetics, anti-termite chemicals and students' labour to effect learning environment management operations in schools. On the other hand, they fail to use the services of professionals and specific committees to perform school learning environment management operations. This is a major setback because committees will afford the head-teachers extra resourcefulness and help from community members. Isma'il, (2019) opines that positive school learning environment management requires the cooperation and joint efforts of the staff, students and

other education stakeholders. In addition, Umar (2013) contended that principals should not rest on their oars simply because they have delegated duty to some staff. This could be that some of the head-teachers were not effectively groomed in the principles and practice of school management. This shows a great danger for the teaching and learning process. This implies that this category of head-teachers who find themselves in the administration of school will surely be at a loss as to what to do.

Summary of the Major Finding

From the result above, the study found that:

Government does not organised regular training and retraining of head-teachers so as to update their leadership, knowledge, managerial skills and general school management to cope with the school administrative challenges.

Government does not provide head-teachers with funds to manage classrooms, libraries, laboratories, recreational facilities, assembly hall, school farm, staff rooms, school gardens, offices, vehicles and other infrastructure.

Primary schools across the state have no functional relevant committees in day-to-day schools' management.

Head-teachers are selected and appointed across the state on the basis of political patronage, sentiment or favouritism.

No adequate security arrangement made by the head-teachers to safeguard available school learning environment and prevent the vandalism of general school environment.

Head-teachers do not establish committees made up relevant stakeholders from the host community to oversee the proper management of the school.

There is poor communication and collaboration with teachers and other stakeholders in the day-to-day administration of the school particularly the school learning environment management.

Head-teachers across the state exhibit non-challent attitude toward supervision of school learning environment.

Conclusion

The findings of the study show the following conclusions: the level of head-teachers' school learning environment management in Katsina state public primary schools to be highly influenced by the effective and efficient level of head-teachers' school learning environment management in public primary schools in Katsina state, Nigeria. The findings of this study maintained that regular training and retraining of head-teachers so as to update their leadership, knowledge, managerial skills and general school management to cope with the school administrative challenges. Schools require suitable classrooms, libraries, laboratories, recreational facilities, assembly hall, school farm, staff rooms, offices, vehicles and other infrastructure to improved academic performance for the public primary schools across the state. Relevant various committees be established to be involved in day-to-day schools' management. Primary school head-teachers should be selected and appointed across the state on merit not on the basis of political patronage, sentiment or favouritism. Head-teachers of all the state primary schools should establish committees made up relevant stakeholders from the host community to oversee the proper management of available school learning environment.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommended:

1. Regular training and retraining of head-teachers so as to update their leadership, knowledge,

- managerial skills and general school management to cope with the school administrative challenges.
2. Schools require suitable classrooms, libraries, laboratories, recreational facilities, assembly hall, school farm, staff rooms, offices, vehicles and other infrastructure to improved academic performance for the public primary schools across the state.
 3. Relevant committees be established to be involved in day-to-day schools' management.
 4. Primary school head-teachers should be selected and appointed across the state on merit not on the basis of political patronage, sentiment or favouritism.
 5. Adequate security arrangement should be made by the head-teachers to work with the local vigilante groups to safeguard available school learning environment and prevent the vandalism of general school environment.
 6. Head-teachers of all the state primary schools should establish committees made up relevant stakeholders from the host community to oversee the proper management of available school learning environment.
 7. All public primary school head-teachers should communicate and collaborates with teachers and other stakeholders in the day-to-day administration of the school particularly the school learning environment management.
 8. Head-teachers across the state should exhibit the habit of prompt supervision in the school learning environment management.

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