

APPRAISAL OF SCHOOL PLANT ADEQUACY FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION IN AYEDADE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on the appraisal of adequacy of physical plant for primary education in Ayedaade Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria. The research method was descriptive. Through stratified random sampling technique, physical plants in twenty-nine primary schools were assessed by 116 teachers using the questionnaire method. Chi-square was the method of data analysis. The result showed that while land space for development purposes were adequate, classrooms, sports and recreation equipment, toilet facilities and portable water were inadequate. However, rural and urban dichotomy was only significant in the tables and chairs for pupils. It was suggested that parents' involvement in the provision of school plant and facilities should be encouraged.

Keywords: School plant; Primary education; School types; Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Schools are established for the purpose of instruction. Teachers and learners must be properly accommodated to facilities teaching and learning. The school physical plant protects the physical and emotional well-being of the students and teachers from sun, rain and danger. It also provides for comfort, safety and performance. Guthrie (2002) Encyclopedia of Education defined school plant as consisting of the land space, buildings, classrooms, playground, school farm, laboratories, equipment and all facilities designed to facilitate teaching and learning processes in the school system. Mbikpom (2000) saw school plant as the total physical expression of the school curriculum in construction, external and internal arrangement of buildings, equipment, facilities and the overall school environment. Uwheraka (2005) in his study revealed that facilities below approved standard could also lead to reduction in the quality of teaching and learning in schools, resulting to poor students' academic performance. While Sureiman (2010) in his study, found that school infrastructure, and availability of teaching requirement have significant impact on academic performance of secondary school pupils in Kenya, Newhouse and Beegle (2006) in their own study, revealed that higher quality imputes promote higher test scores in the public schools in Indonesia. In the same vein, Murillo & Roman (2011) submitted that infrastructure impacts on the achievement of primary education students in Latin America.

Owoeye & Yara (2011) in their study on school facilities and academic achievement could not establish a significant difference in the performance of students in rural and urban secondary schools, they however submitted that facilities are potent to high academic achievement of students. Pheko (2006) also asserted that the amount of learning in schools is facilitated by the available quantity and quality of physical plant in them. In fact in his later study on 'Conflict Between Aims and Outcomes: Comparison of one Cohort's Primary School Leaving Examinations and Junior Certificate Results of 2003 and 2006 in Botswana, Pheko (2010) concluded that there was the need to improve students' performance at junior secondary level by providing; adequate teaching infrastructure.

The Federal Government of Nigeria (2006) in her national policy on education emphasized that the primary education is the institution where children aged 6 to 11 years plus receive basic education on which the success or failure of later education depends. Fafunwa (1967) had stated that this childhood or elementary education is the core of African development. Therefore, it must be provided adequately. This cannot be done without the necessary input such as the physical plants.

Critics of Nigeria's educational system at home and abroad have shown some degree of disappointment about the state of education in this country-particularly in the primary and secondary schools. Akinsanya (1995) explained that the amount of learning and knowledge imparted in schools were scanty and poor, that the school lacked proper and moral content and that the physical facilities were not conducive for effective learning being either non-existent or in a deplorable state. Furthermore, the author summarized the main educational issues then as the erosion of quality. The report went further that many primary schools suffered from poor condition for learning, dilapidated or half completed building, insufficient desks and overcrowded classrooms.

Purpose of the Study

The above comments were made over a decade ago. Naturally, one would have expected some changes. This study therefore assessed the adequacy of physical plant in the primary schools in Ayedaade Local government area of Osun State with a view to discover the possible changes between then and now. In other words, are there any changes in the quantity of school plants available in the primary schools between now and then? And how adequately are they?

Hypothesis

The hypothesis that, there is no significant difference in the adequacy of plant facilities in the rural and urban schools in Ayedaade Local government Area (LGA) was tested at 0.05 significant levels.

Significance of the Study

This study would assist the educational managers at the Federal, state and Local Government levels to identify the areas of school plant needs and formulate policies for efficient allocation of resources for primary education. This will enhance teaching and learning in the primary schools.

METHODOLOGY

Population

The population was made up of the 69 public primary schools in Ayedaade LGA of Osun State. There were three zones in the LGA. They were Gbongan, Odemu and Orile-owu zones of the LGA and recognized by the Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) for her administrative purposes. There were 29, 19 and 21 schools in these zones respectively. The primary schools in Gbongan and Odemutownships were classified as urban schools. Others were categorized as rural schools. The survey covered only nine items. Only the quantities available were assessed. The items were land area/space, classrooms, offices for headmasters, playing fields sports/recreation structures, toilet facilities, portable water, tables and chairs for pupils and.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The school headmasters/Headmistresses (HMs) and three other randomly sampled teachers from each sampled schools were the respondents to the instrument designed for the study. Thus, 116 respondents were involved. Stratified random sampling procedure was employed in the selection of 12, 8 and 9 schools from Gbongan, Odeomu and Orileowu zones respectively. Twenty nine schools were sampled altogether. Twelve (12) of these schools were rural schools, while seventeen (17) were urban schools.

The Instruments

A questionnaire, Survey of School Plant for Primary Education Questionnaire (SSPPEQ) was designed for the study. It consisted of two parts. Part A of the SSPPEQ requested for the background information of the respondents, while Part B sought for the survey of the availability of school plants in the primary schools. There were nine items to be assessed by the respondents by completing for “Adequate” or “Not Adequate” in the space provided and as applicable to each of the items in their schools.

The investigator further had an interview session with the Secretary of the LGEA on the adequacy of physical plant for primary education in Ayedaade Local Government Area.

Validation and Reliability of The Instrument

The initial draft of the instrument was given to four colleagues of the researcher for their comments and reactions. The suggestions of these scholars were reflected in the final draft. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by using a test-retest method in five primary schools in Gbongan. A reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained by using the Spareman rank order Correlation.

Procedure

The permission of the Secretary of the Ayedaade Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) was sought to carry out the investigation in the area. The investigator personally went round the sampled schools. He sought for the cooperation of the headmasters/headmistresses who also provided their respective staff-lists from where three teachers were sampled.

The administration of the instrument took four weeks because of the distant location of the schools. The 116 questionnaires distributed were completed and returned for analysis. Analysis was done by means of frequency counts, percentages, and chi-square statistics.

DISCUSSION

The adequacies of physical plants in twenty-nine primary schools were assessed by one hundred and sixteen teachers of these schools. The frequency counts of ‘Adequate’ and ‘Not Adequate’ were made in order to answer the question posed earlier. The result is shown in the table below.

Table 1. Adequacy of Physical Plant for Primary Education

S/N	Items	Freq. Counts Of (Adequate)	Freq. Counts of (Not Adequate)	% Resp. (Adequate)
a.	Land area/space	107	9	92.24
b.	Classrooms	48	68	41.38
c.	Offices (HM/ASS HMs)	71	45	61.20
d.	Playing fields	100	16	86.21
e.	Sports/Recreation structures	10	106	8.62
f.	Toilet facilities	45	71	38.79
g.	Portable water (well, borehole, pipe borne)	28	88	24.14
h.	Tables and chairs for pupils	68	48	58.62
i.	Tables and chairs for teachers	72	44	62.07

As shown in the table above, land area/space available in schools were adequate. One hundred and seven of the one hundred and sixteen teachers sampled for the investigation attested so. This represents 92.24 percent of the total response. The playing fields, tables and chairs for teachers, offices for (HM/ASS HMS), and tables and chairs for pupils were also found to be adequate with 100, 72, 71 and 68 ‘Adequate’ counts respectively.

Sports and recreation structures were the most inadequate plants in the primary schools. Only 10 teachers attested that the sports and recreation equipment in their schools were adequate. Others in descending order of inadequacy were portable water, toilet facilities and classrooms with 28,45 and 48 ‘Adequate’ counts respectively.

In other to test the hypothesis that, there is no significant difference in the adequacy of physical plants in the rural and urban schools, the questionnaire were collated on the basis of location of schools-urban and rural, so that the X^2 could be calculated. There were 48 and 68 respondents from the rural and urban schools respectively.

Table 2. Adequacy of Plants in Rural and Urban Schools

S/N	Items	Location Of Schools	Freq. Counts Of ‘Adequate’	Freq. Counts ‘Not Adequate’	X^2 Calculated
a.	Land area/space	Rural	47	1	3.68
		Urban	60	8	
b.	Classrooms	Rural	20	28	0.002
		Urban	8	40	
c.	Office (HM/ASS HMs)	Rural	30	18	0.06
		Urban	41	27	
d.	Playing fields	Rural	39	9	1.69
		Urban	61	7	
e.	Sports/recreation Structures	Rural	6	42	1.56
		Urban	4	64	
f.	Toilet facilities	Rural	22	26	1.71
		Urban	23	45	
g.	Portable water (well, borehole, pipe borne)	Rural	14	54	1.13
		Urban	14	54	
h.	Tables and chairs for teachers	Rural	34	15	5.03
		Urban	34	33	
i.	Tables and chair for teachers	Rural	34	14	2.68
		Urban	38	30	

The X^2 table value at 0.05 level of significance and 1 df. is 3.841. The X^2 calculated values range from 0.002 to 5.03. The only significant value of 5.03 is for tables and chairs for pupils. Therefore, the null hypothesis with respect to this variable was rejected. Therefore, there was a significant difference in the availability of tables and chairs for pupils in rural and urban schools. Other variables tested showed no significant difference.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Five of the nine items investigated were found to be adequate. Land area/space topped the list. Others included the playing fields, tables and chairs for teachers, offices for headmasters and tables and chairs

for pupils. Tables and chairs could have been provided by each parents for their wards. The parents Teachers Association (PTA) could have also raised fund for teachers' tables and chairs.

Sports and recreation structures were found to be grossly inadequate. Most parents would not have subscribed to the provision of different courts-for volleyball, basketball and the likes in the primary schools. They would have discouraged their wards from taking part in sporting activities. Government supports for these items in recent times have also declined.

Other areas of inadequacies were portable water, toilet facilities and classrooms. It might be expensive to provide a well, a pit-toilet and classrooms for primary schools. The benefits of their provision however quite outweigh their costs. These types of plants provide and protect the physical and emotional well-being of the pupils and teachers from sun, rain and danger. Their inadequacy would have contributed in no small measure to the conclusion drawn by Nwabueze (1993) that the amount of learning and knowledge imparted in schools were scanty and poor.

The hypothesis tested showed that, there is no significant difference in the adequacy of eight of the nine variables investigated in urban and rural schools. The null hypothesis was rejected for tables and chairs for pupils. Another look at tables 2 shows that rural schools have more adequately than urban schools. The rural-urban migration, which tends to increase pupils' population in urban areas could be responsible for inadequate tables and chairs allocated to urban schools.

It is recommended that governments at all levels subscribe more to primary education especially in the provision of physical plant facilities.

The politics of 'free education' should be removed in view of the realities of the economic situation in the country. Parents' participation in the funding of primary education especially in the provision of more classrooms should be encouraged.

All funds allocated through the Education Tax Fund (ETF), the Universal Basic Education (UBE) and World Bank Assisted Programme, should be judiciously spent. Government agencies should ensure that contractors complete their jobs before full payment.

A replication of the study in other local government areas of the federation is suggested in order to have the overall assessment of the adequacy of physical plants in the primary school system.

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