EFFECT OF INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS OF OREDO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EDO STATE

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Abstract

Educational facilities or school infrastructure are those material things that facilitate teaching and learning processes in schools. These include: school buildings, equipment which include teaching aids, books, typewriters, computers science and laboratory equipment, etc. In this regard, notable problems have continued to militate against the effective provision of infrastructural facilities in schools and colleges, such as: poor electricity power supply, criminal wastages of resources by many leaders, poor funding, and so on, in such a way that students gain next to nothing in their quest for education. This paper recommends, among others, that concerted efforts should be made by Nigerian leaders to place more emphasis on the provision of good electricity power supply, shunning all forms of corruption, purposeful funding of education including other basic infrastructure in schools (e.g.: school buildings, tables, desk, and teaching materials). Otherwise, the much needed teaching and learning in schools would be a mirage.

Introduction

Education, is no doubt, a dynamic instrument of change. It is not only the key to maintaining freedom in our land; it is also a key to continued growth of freedom throughout the world. As a result, there is a compulsory need for every individual to be educated.

The school as an educational institution is basically established for instruction and learning. Within the framework of education production function, educational goals, diverse personnel, curriculum, knowledge, physical facilities, materials, students, finance, and so on, are inputs into the school system with the aim of producing well equipped outputs. To ensure that the school is effective and efficient in the performance of its functions, the three components of men, money and materials must be harmoniously available and managed. Coombs (1968) as cited by Osahon (2001) asserted that “any productive system whatever its aim and technology, require management. It must have leadership and direction, supervision and coordination, constant evaluation and adjustment.” In the past, the components of men and money were emphasized to the neglect of materials aspect in school management. Recently, however, efforts are shifting to the material component since no meaningful and positive teaching and learning can take place without school facilities.

School facilities are the material resources that facilitate effective teaching and learning in schools. Castalsi (1971), defined them as those things of education which enables a skilful teacher to achieve a level of instructional effectiveness that far exceeds what is possible when they are not provided. According to Osahon (2001) cited Ogbodo (1996), educational facilities are those material things that facilitate teaching and learning processes in the school. Some of the reasons for inadequacy of facilities and equipment in Nigerian schools has been sudden increase in enrolment of children in schools and reduced level of local support for schools. By nature, educational facilities have been positively linked with students’ academic performance and educational efficiency (Osahon, 1994). In order to realize the educational goals of the school and the school system, funds and facilities are required for the various activities of the school programme as well as for the extracurricular activities.
School facilities or infrastructure can be divided into two categories:

(a) **direct teaching facilities**, that is, those that have direct relevance to the educative process, and

(b) **no direct teaching facilities**, that is, those that have indirect relevance to educative process.

School facilities include: school buildings and equipment as well as school records and books.

School buildings are tangible structures which serve as shelter for educational activities. They include, among others: classrooms, laboratories (e.g.: physics, chemistry, biology, agricultural science, geography and languages, local crafts and home economics), teachers common rooms/offices, toilets, rest rooms, reading rooms, dispensaries, libraries, hostels/dormitories, dining halls, assembly halls, staff quarters, sentry box, etc.

The various types of equipment required in schools are classroom equipment (e.g.: desks, chairs, blackboards, cupboards, shelves, dustbins, dusters, wash hand basins, napkins, teaching aids, etc.). Laboratories equipment for physics, chemistry, biology, agricultural science, languages, geography, etc., sports and games equipment e.g.: football, table tennis, volley ball, hockey stands/crossbar, javelin, hurdles, trophies, jerseys/sports vests, etc.

Schools records/books include: special records books or professional record books kept for day-to-day school affairs such as log-books, admission registers, attendance registers, punishment books, movement books and general administration record books, and they are used for day-to-day running of school administrative duties. They include, among others, inward register, correspondence outward register, store control books, store receiving books, store issuing books. There are also books and periodicals that are supposed to stocked in the library like: text-books, reference books, journals, magazines, newspapers, etc., and they are ready-materials for both students and teachers.

**Need for Facilities in Schools**

The national goal of developing the educational system in such a way as to provide a satisfactory flow of men and women capable of acquiring the skills necessary to exploit to the fullest the natural resources of the country makes it imperative for facilities to be abundantly available in the schools. Buildings are needed to shelter staff and students. Laboratory facilities are needed to generate manipulative skills in pupils. Sports/games facilities are needed to develop the mental, social and physical aspects of the child. The list is endless.

There are three major need areas corresponding to the three domains of Bloom’s taxonomy of educational facilities are needed to develop cognitive areas of knowledge abilities and skills which are necessary prerequisites for academic achievement. Facilities are also required to build affection, values, commitment, and positive emotions in learning. In addition, educational facilities are needed in the school to assist the school in developing the hands and muscles of learners.

**Educational Facilities Specifications**

Educational facilities specifications could be defined as statements that translate the physical requirements of the educational facilities with special reference to their spatial requirements and special features. Educational facilities specifications require detailed information of the educational programme, enrolment, types of instructional spaces and the special features of the school system. The specifications of education facilities are usually worked out by planning experts and kept in the Ministries of Education or written into Education Laws (Aghenta, 1993). For instance, a minimum of 0.8 – 1.3 square metre classroom spaced per student, 2.3 – 3.3 square metre library space per student are spatial requirements for secondary schools. In terms of special features, UNESCO specifies that, for a classroom with a maximum enrolment of 32 students, there should be:

(i) 16 double classroom tables
(ii) 1 teacher’s desk

Ejiro Thelma Akhihiero
Problems

The effects of inadequate infrastructural facilities on performance of students are as follows:

(a) **Inadequate Educational Infrastructure:** This is one of the worst problems facing effective implementation of educational programmes including the UBE. Arisi (2002) stressed that inadequate classroom spaces have resulted in over-crowding in schools. Many primary and secondary schools were built long time ago by both government and church missionaries. Hence, most of the buildings, roof-tops, desks, chairs, tables, floors, etc., have become extremely bad. Many village schools which were built with self-help efforts have been damaged due to long neglect especially blown roof-tops, damaged floors, destroyed windows/doors, and have been occupied by reptiles, while the children take lessons under the trees or shades. Government ought to have put some efforts to renovate them so as to accommodate more pupils but this was not done. Instead, government began to build one block of three classrooms in each primary school with approved colossal sums of money, whereas, it would have been more economical and beneficial to renovate than to build new ones. Hence, only few primary and secondary schools with fewer structures would have needed new ones. Other problems are:

1. Production of half-baked students. Many students spend the required number of years they ought to spend in schools and are not living up to expectations because they have not gained the desired knowledge they ought to gain within the specified time spent.
2. Many teachers no longer find their job interesting and satisfactory because of lack of facilities to carry out their job.
3. The enthusiasm in both students and teachers which create effective teaching and learning is fast fading away, as a result of lack inadequate school facilities. No matter how energetic, enthusiastic and committed a teacher might be, his or her effort, level of performance, effectiveness in the classroom might not produce the required result in teaching, evaluation and management because his or her action to satisfy the motive would be affected by negative context of the environment.
4. There is little or no motivation for both teachers and students to learn.

(b) **Inherent Decaying Behavioural Patterns of Highly Placed Government Officials In-Charge of Work Stations:** Bailey (1986) opined that “decay is inherent in nature”, and many Nigerian people have allowed some supposedly “decaying behaviours” to influence their thinking in the course of discharging their duties. This is the reason why many Nigerian government and private officials who are concerned with the various degrees of implementation of programmes resort to carrying out decaying behavioural patterns as ways of siphoning the funds and materials allocated to them so as to get “rich quick” and enhance their personal aggrandizement to the detriment of the general well-being of citizens/environment.

Aguan (2007:58) explained that many government officials tell lies right from the beginning of implementation. The author further explained that such officials in charge of implementation plan carry out at will:

(i) Criminal wastages of huge sums of money and other material resources through telling lies of varying degrees by issuing fake receipts and certificates to contractors so as to cover high costs supposedly incurred or expended on construction of roads, bridges, buildings and international stadiums including electricity power supply, pipe-borne water supply, provision of drugs to hospitals, etc. Such funds or materials would later settle in their private hands
(ii) inflated contracts for the procurement of supply of tools, gadgets, instruments, equipment, machines, laboratories, furniture and fittings, etc, to schools, colleges of education, polytechnics and universities.

(iii) inflated hotel bills;

(iv) inflated kilometer or mileage coverage between work stations and official headquarters;

(v) frequent repairs of supposedly vehicle break-downs,

(vi) inflated cost of petrol/diesel for vehicles, and so on.

In this regard, when so much money has been siphoned out through the above decaying habits, there would be nothing left to implement any programme for the general good of citizens. This is why Saraydarian (2005) opined that when many people are involved in telling lies with a view to gaining monetary or material reward, it is a sign that such people are personality or self-centred, and their actions will never favour other people and their environments. Hence, they misuse their positions to enhance their greed.

(c) Influence of God-Fathers and Cult-Personalities in Nigeria’s Political Life: The influence of god-fathers and cult-personalities in Nigeria’s nascent political and national life is another cause of poor implementation of vocational and technical education programmes. Speaking on “The God-Father Phenomenon in Democratic Nigeria, Silicon or Real”, Nnamani (2006:8) stressed that “cult personalities have been built alongside the economic upheavals of the country” and that “one clear track of manipulation of the god-father is the segmentation of the political environment into immediate and perishable need zones.” This is the reason why nothing works for the implementation of education programmes. Hence, the candidates they sponsor into various political positions like: president, governor, local government chairman, legislators, etc, resort to “paying homage” to them at regular intervals, thereby, side-tracking the votes of citizens and the implementation of programmes that could benefit national development.

(d) Inadequate Funding of Schools: This is a very big problem, hence, the failure to priotize the use of available funds that would cover areas of need like: employing qualified teachers, procuring textbooks, improving on existing infrastructures, procuring equipment, instruments, teaching aids, and the like.

Lack of funds has resulted in the absence of workshop in schools, in training and re-training of teachers at all levels, inadequate provision of classroom buildings and laboratories, etc. It also affected the attendant problems of shortage of libraries and of stocking them with relevant up-to-date textbooks, as well as irregular payment of teachers’ salaries and allowances.

(e) Teacher Utilization: This is another major obstacle. Musa (2000) has stated that the major problem confronting teacher utilization is in their allocation and distribution to schools. This means that there are many teachers in the urban and sub-urban areas as compared to those in the rural and remote areas. In this case, there is lack of competence of teachers’ utilization in both urban and rural areas. Hence, a teacher’s competent utilization is achieved when there is a good combination of his or her general education, mastering of teaching subjects and personal qualities in the day-to-day discharge of duties.

In this regard, it is a common place to find in most of our public primary and secondary schools that even though teachers are qualified, their personal vices being displayed towards work have affected their competencies. There are numerous personal vices like: absenteeism, frequent ill-health or excuses, frequent maternity leaves, uncooperative attitudes, working at loggerheads with headmasters, headmistresses, principals and members of staff, etc., exceedingly lower the quality of competence, and as such, contribute to lowering the standard of UBE teachers.

Ejiro Thelma Akhihiero
(f) **Lack of Enriched UBE Curricula:** The UBE curricula are yet to be enriched in accordance with its goals and objectives and they ought to have been carried out in several dimensions. The areas for immediate attention are:

(i) Laying a good foundation for life-long learning;
(ii) The inculcation of appropriate levels of literacy and numeracy;
(iii) Developing good aptitude for practical work;
(iv) The acquisition of socially desirable life skills;

They are very related to the teaching and learning of vocational and technical education skills including classroom work and laboratory practice. Also, they equally apply to all forms and conditions of out-of-school learning at the time a child drops from a formal school system.

(g) **Poor Knowledge of Practical Use of Equipment and Maintenance Culture:** Presently, there is a wide-scale poor practical skills among students who have graduated from JSS level, as there is nothing to show that they have learnt the use of equipment in laboratories especially in vocational, technical and science subjects. Hence, the issue of maintenance culture has continued to elude the country.

(h) **Lack of Statistical Population Data for UBE Planning:** There is lack of population data bank in Nigeria that ought to aid UBE planning especially in the provision of more classroom spaces, laboratories, teaching aids and equipment, etc. What happens in most cases is that population figures are usually over-politicized; hence, it has not been easy to allocate school-age population figures from the publicized population census data. It has affected the technical capacity including the logistics for data collection and analysis. This is why it is difficult to plan and implement the UBE programme.

(i) **Poor Monitoring and Evaluation:** As a result of inflated number of pupils for the UBE by many state governors,. adequate monitoring of the school since 1999, and evaluation has been faulty. This depended on the managers assigned to do so. Therefore, Nwagwu (2000) suggest that:

(i) there must be choice of appropriate performance standards and indicators;
(ii) there should be a systematic programme of supervision, inspection and data collection and utilization for periodic monitoring and evaluation of the process and progress of the compulsory education scheme.

In this regard, Nwagwu (2000) also stressed that the implication is that the administrators of educational programmes including the UBE should always monitor not only the nature and rate of attendance, truancy and drop-outs, but also they have to evaluate the reasons why such pupils or students behaved in a particular manner.

(j) **Problems of Integration of Private Schools into the UBE Scheme:** This is another problem. Nwagwu (2000) also asserted that the attendance of pupils or students in public schools is not the only way of satisfying compulsory education regulation. Private schools should be involved.

(k) **Poor Electricity Power Supply:** This is the most basic problem because electricity is the power that moves small-scale businesses, laboratory practical works, industries, etc. It has remained a mirage in Nigeria’s political dispensations as a result of the ‘political will’ to do so. Nigerian leaders are merely interested in what they are able to gather from the economy; hence, nothing works for the general good.

(l) **Brain-Drain Syndrome:** This is due to the poor condition attached to teaching by the attitude of the government. The reward system in cash or fringe benefit cannot be compared with other professions. This is responsible for the high rate of trained teachers who abandon teaching for more lucrative professions.
Conclusion

There is no proper education or we can even say that no effective education will take place where there are no provision of school facilities for effective teaching and learning. School children (pupils and students) who are made to learn under poor provisions of infrastructural facilities become half-baked, and therefore, cannot be useful to themselves and the nation.

Recommendations

It is recommended that government should ensure adequate provision of schools facilities for all government schools in every state and local government areas. Government should create awareness of the danger of lack of inadequate infrastructural facilities in schools to the entire public. Government should through media, encourage parents, individuals and organizations to assist government or support government in provision of adequate facilities in schools for effective teaching and learning.

Government should take the lead in eradicating all forms of corruption through practical examples and good governance by politicians. When this is done, the much desired good electricity power supply, provision of basic infrastructures and good democratic polity will usher in the promotion of a sustainable national development.

References


