

Work Environment and Teachers' Job Performance in Public Primary Schools in Ondo State Nigeria

Femi Idowu Aladetan

Adekunle Ajasin University,
PMB 001, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria
femi.aladetan@aaua.edu.ng

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Abstract

The apparent indiscipline and low quality education in primary schools calls for a serious concern. It is observed that teachers are not performing their duties as expected and this could be as a result of perceived poor work environment hindering effective performance of teachers' duties. Therefore, this study examined work environment and teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. The descriptive research design of the survey type was employed. The sample consisted of 120 teachers and 20 head teachers randomly selected from 20 public primary schools in Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo State. Two researcher-made questionnaires entitled "Work Environment Questionnaire (WEQ)" and "Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ)" were used to elicit response from the respondents. The test re-test method was used to test the reliability of WEQ and TJPQ which yielded coefficients of 0.89 and 0.77 respectively. Four research questions were raised and answered using frequency counts, percentage, and mean, while three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

The findings revealed that school location was moderately conducive for teachers' work; the level of interpersonal relationship among teachers was high and the provision of physical facilities was moderate. The findings also revealed that there was significant relationship between school location and teachers' job performance ($r = 0.310$, $p = 0.001$); and there was significant relationship between provision of physical facilities and teachers' job performance ($r = 0.578$, $p = 0.000$). The study therefore concluded that work environment enhanced job performance of the teachers. Based on the findings and conclusion, it was recommended that physical facilities such as conducive office space, potable water and constant electricity should be provided to aid teachers' job performance.

Keywords: Work Environment, Teachers' Job Performance, School Location, Interpersonal Relationship, Physical Facilities.

1. Introduction

Education can be described as a potent weapon in the arsenal of any nation. It plays a vital role in the economic, social, cultural, political and technological development of a country. Educational organizations that is, schools are established to help the citizenry of a country acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes which are of necessity in contributing meaningfully to the betterment of the nation.

The primary level of education is the first and basic education acquired by children within the ages of 6 and 11 years. It is bedrock upon which other levels of education are built. The goals of this level of education, according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) in its national policy on education are to inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy skill and ability to communicate effectively; lay a sound basis for scientific, critical and reflective thinking; promote patriotism, fairness, understanding and national unity among others. To achieve these lofty goals, the roles of teachers cannot be overemphasized. Teachers are the implementer of the curriculum and they play crucial role in imparting the requisite knowledge, skill and attitude in the pupils.

The responsibilities of teachers in building responsible pupils are tremendous. These include preparation for classes by writing suitable lesson notes with supportive instructional materials, delivering effectively in the classroom, managing students in the classroom, marking pupils' assignments, keeping pupils' records, participating and helping pupils participate in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. However, it has been observed that teachers are lagging behind in the performance of these tasks and this makes the primary schools appear ineffective to the beholding of stakeholders. These perceived inadequacies could be linked to the apparent poor work environment of teachers in public primary schools in Ondo State. As stated by Al-Anzi (2009), the performance of the staff (teaching and non-teaching staff) could be influenced by different factors such as job satisfaction, training and development, workplace environment both internal and external, motivation, leadership style and so on.

Teachers could be influenced by certain activities around their working environment. In a common parlance, working environment is identified as a place where one works. A decent working environment is a condition where individuals can do their jobs in an ideal, secure, healthy and comfortable manner. Unhealthy and unsafe work environment such as schools being located in a rowdy environment with poor ventilation, immoderate noise, too close to the roadside and others could affect teachers' job performance and health. Chiyonka and Naidu (2013) defined work environment as an orderly environment in which the school members feel valued and able to pursue their dreams without concerns about disruptions and safety. This infers that the location of the school is germane when it comes to work environment. Jihina (2012) in Elujekwute, Shir and Nnome (2021) saw work environment which is also tagged school environment as facilities that are present in the school to engender students' performance and it includes books, audio-visual, software and hardware of educational technology as well as size of classrooms sitting position and arrangement, availability of tables, chairs, chalkboards, shelves

and others. Areas of work environment as identified by Elujekwute et al (2021) are appearance and physical plant, students' interactions, faculty relations, attitude and culture among others.

On this basis, therefore, work environment, in this study, refers to school location, extent of provision of physical facilities for teachers' uses and interpersonal relationships among members of staff and school administrator. Working environment shows how much the organization values teachers and the standards it expects from the teachers for the realization of the expected outcome (Armstrong & Murlis, 2007). Teachers, who are the initiators and facilitators of teaching and learning activities may perform better if conducive working environment is provided for them in terms of schools being sited in conducive environment, providing facilities to make them comfortable at work and creating an aura of gregariousness in the school system.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between work environment and teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Ondo State. Specifically, the objectives are:

1. To investigate the conduciveness of school location in Ondo State.
2. To determine the level of interpersonal relationships among members of staff in public primary schools in Ondo State.
3. To find out the extent of provision of physical facilities in public primary schools in Ondo State.
4. To examine the level of teachers' job performance in public primary schools Ondo State.

1.2 Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study.

1. How conducive is the location of schools as perceived by primary school teachers?
2. What is the level of interpersonal relationships among teachers in public primary schools in Ondo State?
3. What is the extent of provision of physical facilities in public primary schools in Ondo State?
4. What is the level of teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Ondo State?

1.3 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study

1. There is no significant relationship between school location and teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Ondo State.
2. There is no significant relationship between interpersonal relationship and teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Ondo State.
3. There is no significant relationship between provision of physical facilities and teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Ondo State.

2. Literature Review

Jayaweera (2015) conducted a study to test the relationship between work environmental factors and job performance with work motivation and the extent to which this relationship is mediated by work motivation among a sample of hotel workers in England. In this cross-sectional study, the results showed that there was a significant relationship between work environmental factors

and job performance. Ajala (2012) studied the influence of workplace environment on workers' welfare, performance and productivity in government parastatals of Ondo State, Nigeria. The results showed that workplace features and good communication network at the workplace have an effect on worker's welfare, health, morale, efficiency, and productivity. Nakpodia (2011) reported that when the work environment of primary school teachers are improved, their productivity and educational quality would be enhanced.

On the relationship between school location and teachers' job performance, Flower and Welbery (2009) found that school location in most secondary schools were poor and learning environment is not encouraging. Ananga (2011) opined that teaching and learning in secondary schools were mostly affected by poor school location or environment and these create challenges to teachers' performance in the class and these challenges, as explicated by Nwachukwu and Anina (2014), were as a result of poor school location/climate change which leads to poor education, inadequate resources for teaching and students' poor academic performance. Essien and Njok (2019) found a significant relationship between school location and teachers' job performance in social studies in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. In furtherance, Elujekwute et al (2021) submitted that when a school is built near market place, the activities from the market would distract the teachers and learners from concentrating hence, impacting the teaching-learning process negatively.

The role of interpersonal relations developed among teachers in the school is essential. Interpersonal relationships are developed in a positive and friendly climate and the role of the principal in ensuring this cannot be over-emphasised (Pomaki, 2007). The existence of these interpersonal relations in the school makes the school a place of social learning, in which the principal, teachers and students are under a set of rules, regulations and values which interact with one other (Pasiardis & Pasiardi, 2006).

Mustapha (2013) opined that the relationship between supervisor and subordinate or among co-workers should be strengthened and stepped up for this situation brings about job satisfaction. Employees working together are expected to share a special bond so as to deliver their best. Harahap (2017), in his research on the influence of principals' managerial competence on teachers' productivity found that principals' interpersonal relationship has positive but not significant effect on teachers' productivity. Aladetan (2019) found that there was significant relationship between principals' interpersonal relationship and teachers' attitude to work in secondary schools in Ondo State. Nwinyokpugi and Omunakwe (2019) also found in their empirical study that workplace interpersonal relationship significantly influenced organizational productivity in deposit money banks in Port –Harcourt.

Oswald (2012) in his study on the effect of working environment on workers performance: The case of reproductive and child health care providers. The results indicated that the physical component of the work environment has the strongest effect on the performance level of employees. An element such as level of distraction (noise), work interaction and privacy are not considered important by the RCH workers. The same findings can be generalised to public primary school teachers as they have similar social, physiological, biological and other essential needs.

According to Fernandes and Rocha (2009), lack of good physical conditions reduced the morale and affected the attitude of teachers. For teachers' performance to be maximized in service delivery, they need a quality physical working environment with required resources. Physical working environment constitutes the physical setting in which teachers perform their duties. These include office accommodation, instructional materials, lighting, temperature conditions, workshop equipment, library resources, classroom space, information and communication technology (ICT) facilities among others. However, Arogundade and Bolarinwa (2011) reported that teachers at times work under the most unsafe and unhealthy conditions like dilapidated physical buildings, outdated libraries, stinking abandoned classroom and broken furniture which decreases their morale. They also reported that teachers work environment in terms of provision of physical facilities, motivation and teachers-students relationship were not adequate and encouraging to enhance better classroom management. The study by Naharuddin and Sadegi (2013) indicated that there are only two variables that significantly affect the employees' performance and these are job aid and physical workplace environment.

Exceptional learning outcomes in schools could be achieved as a result of teaching staff commitment, positive attitude and effectiveness. It appears little attention has been paid to work environment that impedes excellent job performance of teachers especially at the primary school level. Researches have been conducted on work environment and teachers' job satisfaction and performance but numerous of these studies were carried out in secondary and tertiary levels of education. It appears primary schools, which is the foundation upon which other levels of education are built have been neglected, research-wise, in this regard. A conducive work environment can provide comfort and security for teachers in carrying out the instructional and non-instructional duties. It could aid teachers to perform their job and obligations effectively, whereas, an unconducive work environment would do the exact opposite. Teachers with optimal performance can significantly impact the future of their pupils and attain the lofty educational goals. However, it is observed that teachers' job performance is not optimal and this could be as a result of inadequate provision of physical resources as well as the superficial relationship which impede collegiality among teachers. Hence, this study investigated the relationship between work environment and teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria.

3. Methodology

The descriptive survey design was employed for this study. The targeted respondents for this study were all head teachers and teachers in public primary schools in Akoko South West Local Government Area of Ondo State. The sample was 140 respondents comprising 120 teachers and 20 head teachers. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 20 public primary schools in Akoko South West Local Government Area. Six teachers were randomly sampled in each school to give a total of 120 teachers and the head teachers of the 20 public primary schools also participated in the study. Data were collected using two self-structured questionnaire titled "Work Environment Questionnaire (WEQ)" and "Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ)". The questionnaires were divided into two sections. Section A contained the respondents' demographic characteristics, while section B contained items on the variables of the study. The instruments were subjected to face and content validity procedures by experts in the

Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State. The test-retest method was adopted to test the reliability of the instruments. Copies of the questionnaires were administered and re-administered at two weeks' interval to the same subjects who are not participants in the study. Reliability coefficients of 0.89 and 0.77 were obtained for WEQ and TJPQ respectively. The study adopted descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data collected. Descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage and mean were used in answering the research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significant level. In answering the research questions, mean scores below 2.5 were considered low or rejected; mean scores between 2.5 and 3.0 were considered moderate while mean scores above 3.0 were considered high.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Answering Research Questions

Research Question One: How conducive is the location of schools as perceived by primary school teachers?

Table 1. Conduciveness of School Location

S/ N	ITEMS	SA		A		D		SD		X
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	My school is located near the market place which affect teachers job performance	44	36.7	30	25.0	22	18.3	24	20.0	2.70
2	My school is sited by the road side	44	36.7	46	38.3	22	18.3	8	6.7	3.05
3	The school is situated in a serene and conducive environment	24	20.0	58	48.3	34	28.3	4	3.3	2.85
4	The school is sited far away from teachers and students' residence	24	20.0	60	50.0	28	23.3	8	6.7	2.83
5	School environment is conducive for effective teaching & learning process if school is sited along farm settlement area	24	20.0	40	33.3	36	30.0	20	16.7	2.56
6	Running school beside mechanical workshop or furniture workshop create good atmosphere in teaching and learning process	6	5.0	16	13.3	34	28.3	64	53.3	1.70
Grand Mean										2.62

Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

Table 1 revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that their schools are sited near market place which could hinder effective performance; also, teachers agreed that schools are sited far away from teachers and students residences. The grand mean of 2.62 is an indication that the areas where primary schools are located are moderately conducive.

Research Question Two: What is the level of interpersonal relationships among teachers in public primary schools?

Table 2. Level of Interpersonal Relationships among Teachers in Public Primary Schools

S/N	ITEMS	SA		A		D		SD		X
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	The idea of the school administrator taking the interest and welfare of the teachers to feel happy with the job	28	23.3	80	66.7	8	6.7	4	3.3	3.06
2	The school administrators' ability to allow teachers in high degree of initiative and creativity in their work makes them to be more dedicated	38	31.7	68	56.7	14	4.7	--	--	3.20
3	The ability of the school administrator to encourage interpersonal relationship among staff creates positive work environment	46	38.3	50	41.7	20	16.7	4	3.3	2.68
4	Teachers are allowed to go about their work the way they want	24	20.0	30	35.0	40	33.3	26	21.7	3.25
5	Teachers interact freely with the head teacher and with one another	36	30.0	50	41.7	22	8.3	12	10.0	2.91
6	Teachers willingly take part in other responsibilities allotted to them by the head teachers	46	38.3	58	48.3	10	8.3	6	5.0	3.20
7	There is high degree of cohesion among members of staff	30	25.0	48	40.0	30	25.0	12	10.0	2.80
Grand Mean										3.01

Key: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

A cursory look at Table 3 indicated that the means scores of all items exceeded the criterion mean of 2.50. The grand mean of 3.01 implies a high level of interpersonal relationships among teachers in public primary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Research Question Three: What is the extent of provision of physical facilities in public primary schools in Ondo State?

Table 3. Extent of Provision of Physical Facilities

S/N	ITEMS	SA		A		D		SD		X
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	Conducive office space is available for the school administration (head teacher, bursary)	42	35.0	44	36.7	16	13.3	18	15.0	2.91
2	Functional potable water is made available in the school	36	25.0	38	31.7	30	25.0	22	18.3	2.80
3	Toilets (quality of the toilet rooms, separate toilets for male and female teachers, availability of water adjustment to the toilet rooms)	36	30.0	36	30.0	18	15.0	30	25.0	2.65
4	There is constant power supply in the school	16	13.3	36	30.0	28	23.0	40	33.7	2.23
5	Store rooms provided in the school	36	30.0	46	38.0	24	20.0	14	11.7	2.86
6	Staff room is conducive for teachers	28	23.3	40	33.3	20	16.7	32	26.7	2.53
7	Sanitary materials are available in the school	28	23.3	38	31.7	32	26.7	22	18.3	2.60
8	Provision of first aid in case of accident	38	31.7	60	50.0	10	8.3	12	10.0	2.88
Grand Mean										2.68

Key: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

Analysis presented on Table 3 showed that the mean scores of all items exceeded the criterion mean of 2.50 except item 4 which revealed that there is no constant power supply in the schools. The grand mean of 2.68 infers that the extent of provision of physical facilities in public primary schools was moderate.

Research Question Four: What is the level of teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Ondo State?

Table 4. Teachers' Job Performance

S/N	ITEMS	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		X
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	Delivery of curriculum efficiently, so as to achieve the set of goals and standards in school	14	70.0	6	30.0	--	--	--	--	3.7
2	Presentation of lesson in a well-organized manner	18	90.0	--	--	2	10.0	--	--	3.8
3	Participation in all school curricular activities	10	50.0	8	40.0	2	10.0	--	--	3.4
4	Assess student assignments as and when due	10	50.0	8	40.0	2	10.0	--	--	3.4
5	Conduct continuous assessment as and when due	18	90.0	--	--	2	10.0	--	--	3.8
6	Making class work interesting for students	16	80.0	2	10.0	2	10.0	--	--	3.8
7	Complete scheme of work for each term	14	70.0	4	20.0	2	10.0	--	--	3.6
8	Keep accurate records of instructional activities	12	60.0	4	20.0	4	20.0	--	--	3.4
9	Improvise and utilize adequate teaching aids	10	50.0	8	40.0	2	10.0	--	--	3.4
Grand Mean										3.22

Analysis of Table 4 revealed that the level of teachers' job performance in public primary schools was high because the grand mean is higher than the criterion mean of 2.50.

4.2 Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between school location and teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Ondo State.

Table 5. Relationship between School Location and Teachers' Job Performance.

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	r.cal.	r.crit
School Location	120	16.22	2.57	138	0.310*	0.001
Teachers' Job Performance	20	14.50	5.19			

$P < 0.05$

Table 5 shows that the calculated r. value is 0.310 and the critical value is 0.001 which is less than 0.05. This implies that there is significant positive relationship between school location and teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Ondo State, thus, the tested null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between interpersonal relationship and teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Ondo State.

Table 6. Relationship between Interpersonal Relationship and Teachers' Job Performance

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	r.cal.	r.crit
Interpersonal Relationship	120	10.16	2.91	138	0.118	0.104
Teachers' Job Performance	20	14.50	5.19			

$P > 0.05$

Table 6 shows that r.cal is 0.118 while the critical value is 0.104 which exceeded the significant level of 0.05. The implication is that there is insignificant positive relationship between interpersonal relationship and teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Ondo State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between provision of physical facilities and teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Ondo State.

Table 7. Relationship between Provision of Physical Facilities and Teachers' Job Performance

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	r.cal.	r.crit
Provision of Physical Facilities	120	18.53	5.10	138	0.578*	0.000
Teachers' Job Performance	20	14.50	5.19			

$P < 0.05$

Table 7 revealed that the critical value is 0.000, hence, it is concluded that there is significant positive relationship between provision of physical facilities and teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Ondo State. The tested null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

4.3 Discussion

Finding on research question one showed that the conduciveness of location of primary schools was moderate. This indicates that teachers' responses to location of schools were polemical. While some teachers agreed that schools sited by the road side or near market places could constitute distraction to teachers' performance of their duties, others disagreed. This was supported by Akinyele (2010), who opines that teachers are influenced by certain activities around their working environment. Which means that, a decent and a quiet working environment is a condition where individuals can do their job in an ideal, secure, healthy and comfortable manner. Also, Flower and Welbery (2009) found that school location in most secondary schools was poor and learning environment is not encouraging.

Finding on the level of interpersonal relationships among teachers in public primary schools showed that there was high level of interpersonal relationships among the members of staffs in primary schools. This is because teachers agreed that school administrators allow teachers to show high degree of initiative and creativity in their work and this makes them to be more dedicated. This finding agreed with the position of Mustapha (2013) who opined that the relationship between supervisor and subordinate or among co-workers should be strengthened and stepped up for this situation brings about job satisfaction.

Result from research question three showed that the extent of provision of physical facilities in public primary schools was moderate. Facilities such as conducive office spaces, pipe borne water and electricity were not adequately provided. This is in tandem with the finding of Bukola and Alonge (2011) who reported that teachers at times work under the most unsafe and unhealthy conditions like dilapidated physical buildings, outdated libraries, stinking abandoned classroom and broken furniture.

Finding on research question four revealed the level of teachers' job performance in primary schools in Ondo State was high. The analysis revealed that teachers in public primary schools perform well in their day to day activities by presenting lessons expeditiously to pupils, marking their assignments, keeping records and improvising instructional materials to aid effective teaching and learning. This means that, the job performance of teachers in schools will determine its success or failure. This finding agreed with the findings of Buchner (2011), who posited that there is successful performance when workers and teachers contributes effectively towards goals achievement in an organization through the motivation and desire to do the job.

Finding on hypothesis one showed there was significant relationship between school location and teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Ondo State. This corroborates the assertion of Ananga (2011) who submitted that teaching and learning in secondary schools were mostly affected by poor school location. Jayaweera (2015) also found that there was significant relationship between work environmental factors and job performance. Nwachukwu and Anina (2014) asserted that poor school location leads to poor education, inadequate resources for teaching and students' poor academic performance.

Hypothesis two proved that there was insignificant positive relationship between interpersonal relationship and teachers' job performance in public primary schools. This finding aligns with that of Harahap (2017) who found that principals' interpersonal relationship has positive but not significant effect on teachers' productivity. The finding, however, contradicts the finding of Aladetan (2019) who found that there was significant relationship between principals' interpersonal relationship and teachers' attitude to work in secondary schools in Ondo State.

Finding on hypothesis three indicated that there was significant relationship between provision of physical facilities and teachers' job performance in public primary schools. This finding is concomitant with that of Oswald (2012) who found that the physical component of the work environment has the strongest effect on the performance level of employees. In addition, Naharuddin and Sadegi (2013) found that employees' performance was greatly influenced by physical workplace environment.

5. Conclusion

It is concluded that the work environment of teachers in public primary schools is not really encouraging, particularly in the conduciveness of school location and provision of physical facilities needed by teachers to perform optimally. Also, work environment relates significantly with teachers' job performance. While good, conducive and qualitative work environment enhance the performance of teachers positively, bad, unconducive and poor work environment lower teachers' job performance which thus decreases effectiveness and efficiency.

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, it was recommended that:

- School planners and mappers should ensure that schools are located in serene and conducive environment where distraction and immoderate noise would be avoided in order to bring about effective teaching and learning in primary schools.
- Government, non-governmental organisations and philanthropists should help in the provision of physical facilities such as conducive office spaces, potable water and constant electricity should be provided to aid teachers' job performance.
- The head teacher should sustain and intensify efforts in ensuring that the high level of collegiality among teachers is maintained to influence their performance positively.

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