

Perceived Influence of Physical Environment on Early Childhood Education Classroom Management in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State

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Abstract: *The study examined perceived influenced of physical environment on early childhood classroom management. One research question and two hypotheses were raised and formulated to guide the study. The population comprised all preschool teachers. 17 pre-primary schools were selected. 170 caregivers participated in the study. The instrument tagged perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood education classroom management questionnaire (PIPEECECMQ). Six experts validated the instrument and reliability co-efficient was determined as 0.80 with the use of test and retest method and frequency count and simple percentage was used to analyze the research question while t-test and ANOVA were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that pre-primary school caregivers' have positive perceived on physical environment influenced early childhood education classroom management. Recommendations, government and school owners are advised to renovate old buildings through paintings and repairs, replacement of leaking roofs.*

Keywords: Physical Environment, Early Childhood Education Classroom Management

Introduction

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is at the forefront of national agendas around the world. Political leaders, educators, policy makers and parents, are eager to improve the quality of, and access to, Early Childhood Education. This call to action is based largely on the robust and rarely disputed body of evidence that consistently demonstrates that children who attend high quality early care settings benefit significantly both in the short and long term. Among the most commonly cited findings are that children who are educated at very young ages in high quality centers are able to perform at a higher academic level, engage more appropriately with peers and authority figures, have a lower risk of incarceration, and have a greater chance of finishing high school and attending college, than young children who do not receive quality early educational experiences.

However, overcrowded classroom conditions make it difficult for pupils' to concentrate on their lessons and unavoidably limit the amount of time for learning thus affecting teachers' performance. In the developing countries, poor learning environments have always been identified as key factors that lead to poor performance in public primary schools (UNICEF, 2003) Joseph Gottler (1955) was one of the first researchers to discuss factors that influence learning and he established that natural, physical and environmental factors not only have an aesthetic influence but are also real educational factors that influence behavior. These factors directly affect the comfort of students and influence behavior and learning outcomes so that environment and its interaction with the individual's personal characteristics are presented as a powerful determinant of human behavior (Che Ahmad et al. 2010).

Colour is linked to the previous factor. It is a design element that presents a series of psychological effects, such as stimulation or relaxation, also affecting mood and behavior extension. Warm colors like red promote more active behavior and action-oriented activities, while the range of cool colors like blue facilitate passive behavior patterns (Danesty,2004). Danesty (2004) stated that dilapidated school buildings are not mentally stimulating and that facilities that are characterized with low or no sitting arrangement, will also affect pupils' learning negatively. In New York, the government has put up measures to ensure every public primary school has all the required facilities that would promote a conducive physical environment that would be rewarding to both the learner and the teacher and contribute to teachers' satisfaction (Psacharapolous & Woodhall, 1995).

Generally, teaching is really challenging in such schools where a large percentage of the pupils are under performing and the teachers are held responsible to raise the standard, which in return increases job stress. Burnout and stress are some of the emotional factors which may arise from facing the everyday challenges and has foremost influence on teachers' satisfaction (Giacometti, 2005). The quality of education not only depends on the teacher as reflected in performance of their duties, but also in the effective coordination of the school environment (Chuma, 2012). In this study, physical facilities, and school location are some factors within the school physical environment that were thought to be important in influencing the process of teaching-learning and eventually contributing

to teachers" satisfaction hence worth researching on it. Egim (2003) maintained that in a bid to expand the education physical infrastructure in schools, facilities like classrooms and school buildings is considered over the quality of the physical environment. The design and structure of school environment forms the physical facilities of the school which may attract parents of educational institutions in their initial judgments about

In sub-Saharan African countries, the physical environment in public schools is characterized by insufficient facilities and congested classrooms (Adeyemi, 2007). In Nigeria for example, many classes were found to have up to 50 pupils which was higher than the 25 pupils as indicated in the National Policy on Education (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2004). The physical outlook of the school environment is very important in contributing to healthy academic exercise. It forms the fulcrum on which other activities revolve. Adeyemi (2007) while reporting on Ondo State mentioned that the classrooms in most of the schools were inadequate in terms of decency, space, ventilation and insulation from heat. He also noted that the incinerators and urinals were not conveniently placed, and that the school plant was poorly maintained. He lamented that the combination of these deficiencies constituted a major gap in the quality of learning environment.

The researcher considered the following variables as important to the study; teachers' qualification, school type and gender. According to Salami (2004) stated that, sex has no barrier to successful achievement in social studies teaching and learning as both male and female are engaged in education. However, Brady (2001) stated that, in school enrolment, there are more number of male than the females. It is expected that more males would offer social studies subjects than females. While, Azi, Nkom and Aboderin (2001) argued that girls comprise a smaller percentage of children informal education system than boys in many part of Africa. Also explained that education is only a human right, but also central to the transmission of values such as equality, democracy, equity and national unity as well as preparation for citizenship.

Study of school type has demonstrated school type as either government, or independent school. Osakwe, (2009) Therefore, education is the right of every child and must not be denied for any reason. Private schools, also known to many as non-governmental, privately owned, financed and managed by an individual or a group of individuals. Children who attend private schools may be there because they are dissatisfied with public schools in their area. (Mosharraf, 2011), A private school is a school which is not supported financially by the government and which parents have to pay for their children to go to. However, public schools are educational institutions that are owned, managed and financed by government rather than by individuals (Chris, 2014). Public education is generally available for all because it is too expensive. According to Ikeke (2017), Nigeria public schools were popular in the 80s because they had discipline, good teachers, good facilities and were attended by children irrespective of their social class and social economic background in the society, however, the story is different today, as a good number of public school in Nigeria today lack good facilities and most teachers are not competent.

Ngada in Fajonyomi (2007) emphasized that the success or failure of any educational programme rests majorly on the adequate availability of qualified (professional), competent and dedicated teachers. Seweje and Jegede (2005) noted that the ability of a teacher to teach is not derived only from one's academic background but it is based upon outstanding pedagogical skill acquired. The quantitative analyses of Richardson (2008) indicated that measures of teacher preparation and certification are by far the strongest correlates of student in reading and mathematics. The researchers had carry out similar studies in different location and some look at effects of pre- primary education on primary education, home and school factors as determinant of pupils' academic performance in social studies which left some gap to fill in perceived influence physical environment on early childhood classroom management in Ilorin East Area of Kwara State

Statement of the problem

The environment for the teaching and learning activities must implement the following functions: inform, communicate, collaborate, produce, scaffold/support and manage, creation of high quality Early Learning Centers is at the top of the national agendas in nations around the globe, conducive physical environment positively affects pupils cognitively, socially, emotional and physically. However, school physical environments are not enhancing teaching and learning activities as expected due to the fact that some schools physical environment are nothing to write home about, in term of learning corners, physical structures and aesthetic aspect of the structures, lighting and acoustic, lot of provision had been made to innovate some of dilapidated buildings by both of government and stakeholders but the story still remains the same, more so, the schools facilities and resources are getting worsen every day and no one is ready to saddle the responsibilities not even the school principals as at when due, this situation has adverse effect on the all-round development of the pupil which is usually have negative effect on the educational intention

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Research Question

1. What is the perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood education classroom management in Ilorin East Local Governmnet Area of Kwara State?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood classroom management based on gender.
2. There is no significant difference on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood classroom management based on school type
3. There is no significant influence on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood classroom management based on teachers qualification

Methodology

Descriptive survey was adopted in study as the research design. This is because it is concerned with the collection of data for the purpose of describing and interpreting existing situation of the population under the study. The target population for this study includes all pre-primary school caregivers in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State. There are 82 public primary schools and 88 private Nursery schools in East Local Government Area of Kwara State. Simple random sampling was adopted to allow every element in the sample to have equal opportunity of being selected for the study. According to Kwara state annual schools report of 2018, Ilorin East have 88 private schools and 82 public schools and ten percent of it was selected for the study. Seventeen pre-primary/lower basic schools selected in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara state (9 private and 8 public pre-primary schools). In each school, ten preschool teachers were randomly selected to participate in the study. In all, one hundred and seventy preschool teachers were participated in the study.

Questionnaire was used for the purpose of this study. The questionnaire was tagged Perceived Influence of Physical Environment on Early Childhood Education Classroom Management questionnaire (PIPEECECMQ). The instrument is divided into two (2) sections. Section A and B, section A is designed to get demographic data like gender, school type and teachers qualification while section B consisted of ten items to measure perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood education classroom management, a Likert-style four-point scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree) was used. The face and content validity of the instrument that was used for this study was determined by the experts in the field of early childhood and primary education.

The reliability of the instrument was tested using test re test method. Test re-test method was used because it is one of the simplest ways of testing the stability and reliability of an instrument over time. This method was used to obtain responses from a randomly selected school with 25 copies of questionnaire was administered to preschool teachers who shares the same characteristic with the sample respondent in the same study area to test for Reliability. The instrument was administered to them and re-administered after 2 weeks to the same set of respondents, their responses in the first and second test were analysed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), Reliability index obtained was ($r = 0.80$). The data obtained from the study was analysed using descriptive statistics of percentage and frequency count. Inferential statistics was used to test for the stated hypotheses, t-test and ANOVA were tested to measure hypotheses

Result

Research question: What is the perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood education classroom management in Ilorin East Local Governmnet Area of Kwara State?

Table one: table showing the perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood education classroom management in Ilorin East Local Governmnet Area of Kwara State

| S/N | QUESTION ITEMS | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | Mean |
|-----|--|----------------|-----------|----------|-------------------|------|
| B | The classroom setting facilitate learning activities | 28(16.5) | 106(62.4) | 14(8.2) | 22(12.9) | 2.82 |
| 2 | The class setting arrangement enhance teaching and learning. | 23(13.5) | 50(29.4) | 68(40.0) | 29(17.7) | 2.39 |
| 3 | The outdoor facilities promote physical and cognitive development of a child | 88(51.8) | 66(38.8) | 16(9.4) | | 3.42 |

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|--------------|
| 4 | The physical environment determine level of children understanding in the class | 108(63.5) | 43(25.) | | 19(11.2) | 3.41 |
| 5 | The appropriate learning materials stimulate learning of the child | 72(42.4) | 23(13.5) | 49(28.8) | 26.(15.5) | 2.83 |
| 6 | The learning corners allow the teacher to observe some skills among the children | 71(41.9) | 60(35.3) | 13(7.6) | 26(15.3) | 3.04 |
| 7 | Library corner promote the teaching and learning | 54(31.8) | 74(43.5) | 24(14.1) | 18(10.6) | 2.96 |
| 8 | The physical environment determine the level of children academic achievement | 43(25.3) | 53(31.2) | 53(31.2) | 21(12.4) | 2.69 |
| 9 | The physical environment stimulate the teacher's interest in teaching | 56(32.9) | 34(20.0) | 53(31.2) | 27(15.9) | 2.70 |
| 10 | The proper classroom arrangement allow the teachers to skill of each pupil | 79(46.5) | 19(11.2) | 41(24.1) | 31(18.2) | 2.86 |
| Weighted Mean | | | | | | 29.12 |

Note: The figures in parentheses are in percentages

Decision: Negative: 0.00 – 2.49

Positive: 2.50 – 4.00

Table 1 showed perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood education classroom management in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State. The participant's responses to the following were good: The classroom setting facilitate learning activities (Mean=28.2), The outdoor facilities promote physical and cognitive development of a child(Mean=3.42), The physical environment determine level of children understanding in the class(Mean=3.41), The appropriate learning materials stimulate learning of the child (Mean= 2.83), The learning corners allow the teacher to observe some skills among the children(Mean= 3.04), Library corner promote the teaching and learning(Mean=2.96), The physical environment determine the level of children academic achievement(Mean=2.69), The physical environment stimulate the teacher's interest in teaching (Mean=2.70), The proper classroom arrangement allow the teachers to skill of each pupil(Mean=2.86) the participants responded fairly to the following: The class setting arrangement enhance teaching and learning (Mean=2.39). The weighted mean is 29.12 which is a numeric indicator that physical environment influenced early childhood education classroom management

Research hypothesis table two: There is no significant difference on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood classroom management based on gender

Table 2: Summary of t-test analysis showing the difference on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood classroom management based on gender

| Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t | Df | Sig | Remark |
|--------|----|---------|----------------|-------|-----|------|-----------------|
| Male | 73 | 30.5890 | 2.68139 | -.049 | 168 | .701 | Not Significant |
| Female | 97 | 28.0412 | 3.54706 | | | | |

Table 2 shows the difference on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood classroom management based on gender. There is no significant difference on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood classroom management based on gender ($t = -.049$, $df = 168$, $p > 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since significant level is greater than 0.05. This implies that there was no significant difference between male and female on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood education classroom management.

Research hypothesis two: There is no significant difference on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood classroom management based on school type

Table 3: Summary of t-test analysis showing the difference on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood classroom management based on school type

| School Types | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | T | Df | Sig. | Remark |
|--------------|----|---------|----------------|-------|-----|------|-----------------|
| Public | 92 | 29.6087 | 3.52684 | -.967 | 168 | .603 | Not Significant |
| Private | 78 | 28.5769 | 3.26142 | | | | |

Table 3 shows the difference on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood classroom management based on school type. There is no significant difference on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood classroom management based on school type. ($t = -.967$, $df = 168$, $p > 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since significant level is greater than 0.05. There is no significant difference on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood classroom management based on school type.

Research hypothesis three: There is no significant influence on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood classroom management based on teachers' qualification

Table 4: Summary of ANOVA showing influence on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood classroom management based on teachers' qualification

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|-------------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | .004 ^a | 2 | .004 | 3.180 | .985 |
| Within Groups | 1995.884 | 167 | 11.880 | | |
| Total | 1995.888 | 169 | | | |

Table 4 showing influence on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood classroom management based on teachers' qualification. There was no significant influence on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood classroom management based on teachers' qualification. in Ilorin East Local Government area of kwara State. ($F_{(2,167)} = 3.180$; $P > 0.05$). Since the significant value is greater than 0.05, the hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result.

Discussion

The main objective of the study is to investigate whether there is perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood education classroom management East Local Government Area of Kwara State; the result was revealed that physical environment influenced early childhood education classroom management. This finding is not agreement with the views of Megan (2002), whose "research on school climate in high-risk urban environments indicates that a positive, supportive, and culturally conscious school climate can significantly shape the degree of academic success experienced by urban students". The finding of the study also revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood education classroom management and there is no significant difference on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood classroom management based on school type. Lastly the study revealed that there was no significant influence on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood classroom management based on teachers' qualification. in Ilorin East Local Government area of kwara State. The findings was not in line with Fajonyomi (2007) in his study, remarked that the success of any educational enterprise depends largely on the availability of professional teachers.

Conclusion

The conclusions were drawn based the findings of the study, it can be explicitly stated physical environment influenced early childhood education classroom management. There was no significant difference on perceived influence of physical environment on early childhood classroom management based on gender, school type and teachers' qualification

Recommendations

The physical outlook of the school environment is very important in contributing to satisfaction of teachers and pupils. Therefore, there is a need for government and the private school managements to ensure that the level of aesthetic in their schools is improved. They need to renovate old buildings through paintings and repairs, replacement of leaking roofs, as well as demolishing those

buildings that may threaten the lives of teachers and pupils, the preschool teachers' gender, school type and teachers' qualification do not have influence in physical environment on early childhood education classroom management

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