



Management of safety and health for teachers' effective service delivery in public secondary schools in rivers state

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Abstract

The study focused on managing safety and health for teachers' effective service delivery in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study is a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 5,630 teachers from the 247 public secondary schools in Rivers State. The sample of the study was 840 respondents drawn from 84 public secondary schools selected for the study using stratified random sampling technique. Researchers' -structured questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. Mean scores and rank order statistics were used to provide answers to the research questions, while z-test was used to test the two null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings include that Safety and Health Status of the teachers affect the school's service delivery; hence appropriate measures should be put in place to enhance safety and health of teachers. Also, there was no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers' opinions on how safety and health of teachers affect school service delivery as well as the measures to be adopted to enhance the safety and health of the teachers. Recommendations include that government through the appropriate agencies should ensure full implementation of the National School Health Policy for all the educational institutions in Nigeria.

Keywords: management, safety, health, public secondary, service delivery

Introduction

Work in the modern day society has significantly changed from what it was in the good olden days. Some of these changes were as a result of the pervasive technology-driven society being experienced today with its security and health hazards. World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing which could be achieved through proper education (WHO, 2011) [16]. The process of education is transmitted under the auspices of the school in form of service delivery. Secondary school on its own is an educational institution saddled with the responsibility of preparing students for a useful living and higher education (FRN, 2013) [4]. Many researchers have shown positive correlation between the teacher and students academic performance (Aja, 2012; Chike-okoli, 2014) [1, 13]; therefore, the safety and health of teachers cannot be over-emphasised. Safety is a state or condition of freedom from danger or risk and or being protected from harm or other non-desirable outcomes (Hughes & Ferrett, 2013).

In Nigeria, secondary school system as public institution is seriously faced with numerous problems ranging from poor infrastructural facilities to insecurity which consequently affect the service delivery of teachers. Teachers are the managers of all human and material resources and also implementers of educational policies and programmes in the school system. Soni (2012) [12] opined that teachers are trained persons that facilitate learning in classroom situation in order to achieve set educational goals. He further stressed that teachers' health and safety are the keys to quality service delivery in schools. It is against these backdrops that

Adegboyega, Ajayi and Adesina in Ajayi (2013) [2], Ukaigwe and Mba (2006) maintained that unhealthy school environment has adverse safety and health implications that may affect effective teaching and learning. Mato (2016) [9] also noted that poor work environment encourages stress in workers. He suggested the following measures for managing stress: improved staffing, improved work schedule, improved physical environment, adequate social support especially in bereavement, illness among others, involving staff in discussion on issues that concern them, and encouraging staff to spend time with family during vacation time. These she said will go a long way in promoting health and safety of workers as well as enhance their productivity.

There is no gain stating the obvious that healthy and safe environment for the teachers is paramount for effective school service delivery; hence, there should be adequate security, good staff toilets, comfortable classroom and staffrooms, robust health and pension schemes, functional physical, facilities/equipment etc. Teachers' health and safety management is a precursor for identifying and developing students' academic performance so that the goals of education are more effectively achieved. Skybrary (2015) [11] defines health and safety management as a function which exists to assist managers in better discharging of their responsibilities for operational systems deficiencies before error occurs. Health and safety management practices should be given attention as it is geared towards the prevention of accidents and injuries to teachers. The school environment in which activities bring students and teachers to participate in the teaching and learning process must be devoid of these things

that would harm the teachers. Hughes and Ferrett (2013) emphasized that health and safety is no doubt the most crucial investment an organization can make and recommended that appropriate measures should be put in place for protecting teachers from all health and safety hazards in the school. Health, safety measure are actions that are used to manage and control health, safety and hazards that are capable of preventing or eliminating them to an acceptable level. Umezurike and Onoh (2006) ^[15] reported that controlling occupational health and safety hazards is the best way to protect workers from exposure to stressful condition that may greatly retard their performance.

The school organization needs a health and safety policy to demonstrate their commitment to the health and safety of the teachers. That is what the National Health Policy of 2006 in Nigeria intends to provide but the government lacked the political will to implement it. Health policy suggests clearly that the employer is accountable and responsible for the health and safety of the workers during work period; it also shows that employees have complied with the Occupational Health and Safety Act. There is also the need to be aware of the positive safety and health culture. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2011) ^[8] defined safety and health culture as a culture in which the right to a safe and healthy work environment is respected at all levels, through a system of defined rights, responsibilities, duties and where the principles of prevention are accorded the highest priority. Having a safety and health culture in the school system needs the involvement of all members of staff, measures on ground and procedures and practices that will be followed at all times not including the cost and other implications (Ukaigwe and Orlu-Makele, 2016) ^[14]. It is on the above premise that this paper examined how managing health and safety could contribute to teachers' effective service delivery in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Statement of the problem

The secondary school system in Rivers state in the recent time is bedeviled with increasing unforeseen circumstances affecting teachers' quality service delivery. Virtually, almost all the public secondary schools are operating under conditions of existing facilities and equipment which predispose teachers to untold safety and health hazards. Although, the National school Health Policy (2006) made provisions for a safe and healthy school environment for quality service delivery in Nigerian schools but its implementations have not seen the light of the day as many school heads are neither aware nor disposed to it. There appears to be no provision of good water, toilet facilities, lack of proper ventilation, lack of comfortable classrooms and staffrooms, such that the teachers become very uncomfortable easily. The poor sanitary condition of the school environment has affected the physical, mental and emotion of the teachers and their safety appears to be compromised. The teacher's health and safety status determines how far the school goals are achieved; hence this study is carried out to find out how teachers' health and safety are managed in public secondary schools; and whether the teachers' health status affects their service delivery and ultimately the realization of school goals.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study is to find out how to manage safety and health for teacher's effective service delivery in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Find out how management of safety and health affect teachers' effective service delivery in public secondary schools in Rivers state.
2. Find out the measures to be adopted to enhance the safety and health of teachers in public secondary schools in Rivers state.

Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How does management of safety and health affect teachers' service delivery in public secondary schools in Rivers state?
2. What are the measures to be adopted to enhance the safety and health of teachers in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on how management of safety and health affects teachers' service delivery in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the measures to be adopted to enhance the safety and health of teachers in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research method

The study is a descriptive survey research design on managing safety and health for teachers' effective service delivery in public secondary schools in Rivers state. The population of the study comprised all the 5,630 teachers in the 247 public secondary schools in Rivers state. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 840 (400 male and 440 female) teachers drawn from 84 schools representing 15% of the study population as the sample size. Researchers-structured questionnaire titled "Managing Teachers' Safety and Health Questionnaire" (MTSHQ) with 4 Point rating Scale response option thus: Strongly Agree (SA) -4 points; Agree (A) -3 points; Disagree (D) -2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) -1 point. The questionnaire was validated and the reliability ensured using test retest method and calculated with Pearson's Product Moment correlation coefficient which yielded an index of 0.82. The mean of the sum score of the scale which is 2.5 was used for decision rule; hence any item with mean score of 2.5 and above was regarded as agree while item with mean score of less than 2.5 was regarded as disagree. The analysis was done using mean scores and rank order statistics while Z-test was used to test the two null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The result of the analysis is presented in tables according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

Research question one

How does management of safety and health affect teachers' service delivery in public secondary schools in Rivers state?

Table 1: Mean rating of respondents on how management of safety and health affect teachers' service delivery

S/No	Items statement	male	female	Mean set	Rank	Decision
1.	Locating school in a serene environment enhances effective teaching and learning	2.51	2.63	2.57	9th	Agree
2.	Threat free school environment increases teacher's dedication to duty	2.63	2.7	2.67	8th	Agree
3.	Provision of adequate security in the school helps to boost teacher's confidence.	3.01	2.81	2.91	3 rd	Agree
4.	Availability of health facilities in the school helps to improve teacher's instructional output	3.22	3.18	3.2	1 st	Agree
5.	Conducive classroom environment aid teachers to make learning experience easier.	2.71	2.83	2.77	5th	Agree
6.	Provision of health insurance scheme for teachers helps to promote their healthy living	2.53	2.61	2.57	9 th	Agree
7.	Availability of food canteen helps control hunger and to keep teachers in the school till dismissal	2.83	3.51	3.17	2nd	Agree
8	Separate toilet facilities for male and female teachers increases their efficiency	2.68	3.02	2.85	4th	Agree
9	Granting regular medical checkup for teachers helps to improve their fitness to work	2.70	2.80	2.75	6th	Agree
10	Perimeter fencing of the school helps teachers to control students	2.65	2.75	2.7	7th	Agree
	Grand mean			2.82		

Result in Table 1 reveals that the respondents agreed in all the items. The items are rated on criterion mean of 2.50, and all items scored means above 2.5 ranging 2.57 and 3.2 and that suggest that good management of health and safety affect teachers' quality service delivery in public secondary

Schools.

Research Question 2

What are the measures to be adopted to enhance the safety and health of teachers in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Teachers mean rating on measures to be adopted to enhance the safety and health of the teachers

S/No	Items Statement	Male	Female	Mean Set	Rank	Decision
1.	Perimeter fencing of the school with secured gates for safety of lives and properties	2.51	2.53	2.6	9 th	Agree
2.	Deployment of security guards employed to man the school gates.	3.03	2.81	2.92	2 nd	Agree
3.	Locating the school in a serene environment.	2.61	3.01	2.81	4 th	Agree
4.	Provision of recreational facilities for teachers' use.	2.51	2.50	2.51	10 th	Agree
5.	Provision of functional first aid room in the school	2.71	2.71	2.61	8 th	Agree
6.	Provision of health insurance scheme for teachers' regular medical checkup.	2.71	3.01	2.86	3 rd	Agree
7.	Provision of good drinking water in the school.	2.81	2.63	2.72	5 th	Agree
8	Improve waste disposal system for good sanitation in the school.	2.6	2.8	2.7	6 th	Agree
9	Institution of functional teachers' welfare scheme in schools	3.5	2.7	3.1	1 st	Agree
10	Introduction of hazard allowance for teachers.	2.87	2.71	2.79	4 th	Agree
	Grand mean			2.76		

Analysis of data on Table 2 shows that the respondents agreed with all the items as can be seen from the mean scores of the item which ranges between 2.6 to 3.1. The scores were above 2.5 which is the criterion reference point. This suggests that all the items were accepted as measures to be adopted for enhancing safety and health of teachers in public secondary schools.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on how management of safety and health affect teachers' service delivery in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 3: Z-test analyses of difference between mean rating of male and female teachers responses on how management of safety and health affect teachers' service delivery in public secondary schools.

Category of teachers	N	X	SD	df	Z-cal	Z-crit	Decision
Male	400	38.23	41.22	838	1.55	1.96	Accepted
Female	440	41.21	47.11				

Table 3 shows that the z-calculated value of 1.55 is less than the critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha significance level. This implies that there is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers in Rivers state public secondary schools on how management of safety and health affect teachers' service delivery. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the measures to be adopted to enhance the safety and health of teachers in public secondary schools in Rivers state.

Table 4: Z-test analysis of the difference between male and female teachers on the measures to be adopted to enhance the safety and health of teachers in public secondary schools.

Category of teachers	N	X	SD	df	Z-cal	Z-crit	Decision
Male	400	37.18	34.13	838	0.276	1.96	Accepted
Female	440	49.31	41.11				

Table 4 shows that z-calculated value of 0.276 is less than z-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha significance level. This implies that there is no significant difference between mean rating of male and female teachers on the measures to be adopted to enhance the safety and health of teachers in Rivers state public secondary schools. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion of findings

On how management of safety and health affect teachers' service delivery in public secondary schools, the result of the data analysed revealed the following: That serene, threat-free school environment with adequate security, perimeter fence, basic health facilities and conducive classroom enhance teaching and learning. Also, providing teachers with health insurance scheme, regular medical checkup' good food canteen and toilet facilities will help to promote their healthy living and increase their efficiency. These were in tandem with Ukaigwe and Mba 2006 and Mato 2016^[9] findings.

On the measures to be adopted to enhance the safety and health of teachers in public secondary schools, the result showed that perimeter fencing of schools, deploying security guards and locating schools in a serene and threat-free environment will enhance the safety of teachers. Also, providing recreational facilities, functional first aid room, improved waste disposal system, functional teachers' welfare and health schemes as well as paying hazard allowance to teachers are critical to improving the health status which will invariably enhance their performance. These were in consonance with Umezurike and Onoh, 2006^[15] and Hughes and Farrett, 2013 findings.

The findings in hypothesis one table 3 showed that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers on how management of safety and health affect teachers' service delivery in public secondary schools in Rivers state. All items on table 1 have mean scores above the criterion reference point of 2.5, it is very clear that good management of safety and health conditions in school enhances teachers' service delivery in public secondary schools. This finding corroborated Soni (2012)^[12] who averred that teacher's health and safety are keys to quality service delivery in schools. This is also in line with the findings of Hamilton and Ottih (2004)^[6] who observed that occupational hazard which in turn affects workers' health hinders the attainment of organization goals and objectives. This implies that when teachers' health and safety are jeopardized they cannot function well thereby threatening the achievement of educational goal at school level.

The findings in hypothesis two Table 4, also revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean score of male and female teachers on measures to be adopted to enhance teachers' safety and health in Rivers state public secondary schools. In addition, all items on table two have

mean scores above 2.5. This means that both male and female teachers agreed with all the items as measures to enhance teachers' safety and health in schools. This finding is in consonance with the findings of Ajayi (2013)^[2] who reported that unhealthy school environment has adverse safety and health implications that may affect effective teaching and learning. The findings also agree with Gareth, George and Hill (2000)^[5] who reported that supporting employees by helping to prevent those things that pose a threat to them as workers and as human beings is vital if the organization is to function effectively. The study also corroborates with Ingviarson, Kleinhenz, Bearis, Barwick, Cartleya and Wilkinson (2005) cited in Oruwene (2014)^[10] and Mato (2016)^[9] who reported that teachers teaching effectiveness and efficiencies are negatively affected by unconducive environment. It is obvious that appropriate measures should be put in place to ensure safety and health of teachers.

Conclusion

The management of safety and health of teacher is a cornerstone in the achievement of quality service delivery in schools. In other words, the propensity to achieve effective service delivery in secondary schools is a function of good management of teachers' health and safety. This therefore brings to bare the real essence of providing appropriate measures for enhancing teachers' safety and health for the overall schools- service delivery. Managing teachers' safety and health in school fits into the personnel management services such as policy and commitment, health and safety planning, health and safety auditing and attitudinal consciousness which should be a continuous process.

Recommendations

1. There should be a policy guideline for managing safety and health as part of the general requirement for school administrators to implement.
2. More attention should be paid to teachers' welfare such as provision of housing and insurance scheme to reduce their stress level which may impact on their health.
3. Communities around the school should be incorporated in the provision of safety in the school in the form of local vigilante to safeguard the lives and properties of staff and the school.
4. Management of safety and health for effective school service delivery should be the responsibility of all the stakeholders in the education system.

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