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CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE COVID-19 ERA FOR IMPROVED ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN AGUATA LGA OF ANAMBRA STATE.

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ABSTRACT

The study diagnosed classroom management and organization in public secondary schools in the covid-19 era for improved academic performance in Aguata LGA of Anambra State. The study was guided by two research questions. The study adopted descriptive survey design and the population comprised of all the public secondary schools numbering 21 with 824 teachers in Aguata LGA. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 10% of teachers from each of the 10 selected public secondary schools out of 21 public secondary schools in the LGA. The teachers from these selected schools totalling 368 formed the participants. The researcher utilized a self-designed instrument titled "Covid-19 Classroom Management Questionnaire" (CCMQ). Validation of the face and content of the instrument was ensured. The reliability index of 0.82 was obtained through Cronbach Alpha Statistics. The instrument was a modified Likert type of scale of very high extent, high extent, low extent and very low extent which was subjected to mean and standard deviation (SD) to answer the research questions. The results among others include that management of classroom during the era of covid-19 is to a low extent acceptable due to absence of necessary covid-19 classroom facilities as it relates to prevention strategies. The researcher therefore suggested among others that the government should expedite action and supply the needed facilities which the new normal requires to live with the deadly corona virus as no parent would want to lose their ward on the altar of academic pursuit.

Keywords: Covid-19 Era, Public Secondary School, Classroom Management, Classroom Facilities, Improved Performance.

Introduction

The school setting is made up of structures such as the administrative block, the laboratory block, and the classroom block among others. The classroom is peculiar among all other blocks because it is the nucleus of the school building. The classroom is an aspect of the school building where teaching/learning interactions are executed and as such the heart-beat of the school. It is one of the most essential part of the school structure where knowledge, skills, norms, and values are imparted to the learners by their teachers. This impartation of relevant knowledge and skills in the classroom can only be effective when the classroom is fortified with needed facilities. Research has shown that most classrooms in Nigerian public schools are in a sorry state and ill-equipped. Some of the buildings are dilapidated and are yearning for renovation and restructuring

(Abraham, 2013). Suffice it to say that under normal circumstances, ramshackle classroom impairs teaching/learning activities and result to unattainable educational objectives. With the advent of contagious and/or communicable diseases such as Covid-19 it becomes more crucial that classrooms should be adequately furnished and spacious too for improved academic performance. This is imperative to avert the spread of this deadly virus, adequate ventilation is needed as well as maintaining physical distance which can only be achieved in a well-equipped classroom and standard classroom.

The classroom as the place where students stay in school for teaching/learning experiences desires to be adequately catered for. The teachers who are managers of these classrooms should on their own organize and coordinate the classroom facilities for the benefit of the students. This is even more demanding with the emergence of covid-19 pandemic. The surge of covid-19 that ravaged many nations of the world including Nigeria brought about the "New normal" in our everyday life activities. The fact that this covid-19 comes in waves makes it mandatory that the adherence to Covid-19 protocols remains a habit everyone should imbibe especially in the classroom setting. Consequently, the classroom must be well built, furnished and comfy for effective teaching /learning outcome as well as prevention of the deadly virus that has remained adamant in spite of all odds.

The state government now has to do the needful through the mandate given by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in collaboration with Presidential Task Force (PFA) (2020) on the nature of classroom management and organization before the post covid-19 lockdown resumption of schools. The government is thus expected to restructure the classroom furniture as well as the entire school environment to ensure that the spread of the disease is highly curtailed or drastically reduced.

Covid-19 era

This is the period during which corona virus disease atrophied many nations of the world. The deadly illness began in 2019 from Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China and then spread exponentially to other parts of the continents. Corona virus is defined as a sickness caused by strange virus named corona which is severe acute respiratory syndrome formerly known as 2019-nCoV. The deadly illness was declared a global pandemic on March 11, 2020 by World Health Organization (WHO) according to Cennimo (2021). Prior to this declaration, the ailment had swept through many countries and killed in thousands, this lead to global total lockdown, the education sector was not left out.

It was later observed that lockdown cannot continue unabated consequently people began to suggest ways of living with the disease while observing specified protocols to reduce tremendously the possibility of its transmission from one person to another. By this process the new normal became the answer. New normal is the process of imbibing some prescribed protocols which was not in practice before the advent of covid-19. It is a significant change in life styles which warranted new ways of dealing with one another in other to avert the spread of corona virus.

Following the new normal the BBC News on 11th January, 2021, issued the following guide lines about resumption of schools:

1. Compulsory wearing of face masks by all students, teachers and other school players when they are in school.
2. Temperature checks and hand washing facilities strategically placed in designated areas in the school.
3. Frequent water supply and provision of sanitizer.
4. Avoid crowded places like assembly, class size, and boarding houses.
5. Maintain social distancing of two-kilometre apart.

Nigerian schools were advised to strictly practise all the stated protocol as there will be occasional visit to schools to ensure compliance.

Similarly, Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) (2020) in collaboration with the Presidential Task Force (PTF) outline the under mentioned covid-19 protocols among others:

a. Schools should make available to learners "medical status" forms for students to fill in conjunction with their parents and such forms should kept by the school head.
b. Make sure that a triage point is earmarked at the entrance so as to check for high temperature, put on face mask and perform hand hygiene on any who wish to enter the school.
c. Ensure well ventilated classroom with seating arrangement in line with one metre apart.
d. Ensure that all the school players wear face mask at all times including visitors to the school; teacher were required to monitor children with special needs on when to put on or remove the masks, make sure learners are allowed to observe break on wearing of face masks, in the process of wearing back the face mask, hand hygiene should be applied.
e. Schools must reserve a portion of the school structure for sample collection site.
f. Schools should ensure easy access to running water, soap and hand washing facilities.
g. The sick bay unit of the school should be with staff that have PPE outfit.

The above stated guide lines should be implemented in schools and because the classroom is the place where students stay for teaching and learning activities, it tells more on the teachers who manage the classroom to implement all that to the latter for the health of the children. This the teachers should do through effective classroom management and organization.

The Concept of Classroom Management and Organization

Classroom is described as the place where teaching/learning interactions take place. It is where the content of the curriculum is inculcated into the learners with the aid of the teacher or an instructor. It is the hub of the school building. Since it is where teaching and learning takes place, it has to be efficiently managed and organized to make for improved academic performance. The management and organization of the classroom is therefore of paramount importance.

Management on the other hand is the process of planning, organizing, coordinating and directing the affairs of the human element in the classroom as well as the non-human elements in the classroom

so as to foster better teaching/learning experiences. In the same vein, Onele (2016) citing Ude (2002) succinctly put that classroom is the concerted human effort which is directed to enhance optimal use of the classroom accessories for goal accomplishment. It is premised on the heels of this development that Ogbonnaya, Chukwudebelu, & Ahamefula, (2019) described the teacher as the manager who arranges and utilizes classroom facilities to inspire the students to achieve academic excellence. Inefficient classroom management could be hazardous to the students, this is what prompted Excellency Learning Corporation (2008) in Oluwuo, Anyamele & Akpan, (2015) to instruct concerned staff in classroom management to be vigilant as there may be naked wires from the sockets in the classroom which could lead to electric shock and/or possible death. This is imperative because teachers are solely the classroom administrators and could be litigated for their actions and inactions in the classroom atmosphere. To give credence to the above proclamation, Wellness (2020) lucidly put that new normal is a reform from the people's way of carrying out life activities to accommodating requirements introduced to curb the spread of covid-19 pandemic. According to the scholar, these changes include but not limited to hand hygiene, temperature check, maintaining social and physical distance and use of face masks in public places. This is crucial to curtail this contagious ailment as people cannot continuously be under lockdown. All these reformations, adjustments and acclimatization to live with the toxic virus culminated to what is now referred to as the new normal.

To Ohia and Obasi (2016) the classroom management is three faceted namely physical, psychological and social aspects. Physical is the orderliness with which the furniture is arranged and organized to the comfort of the students. Psychological environment is the disposition of the students in relation to the responsive to their dreams, interests and aspirations. The social aspect is the interrelationship among students themselves and the teachers which is determined by the teachers' personal attributes. These entire elements make the classroom environment healthy and worthwhile thus inspires class attendance, active participation and a better result.

Obviously, in the secondary school, the subject teachers are assigned to different classes as form or class teacher. It is the duty of this form teacher to adequately form the class allocated to them through management and organization. The teacher is duty bound to ensure the neatness of all the classroom furniture in her class. She organizes and arranges them in a way that creates forum for the subject teacher to walk around the class during instruction. The students also have free movement in the class. The teacher makes seating arrangement in an orderly manner and the chalk board strategically positioned.

Classroom management and organization are therefore the process employed by the form teacher to arrange and take care of all the classroom furniture to foster teaching/learning behaviours. It is further described as the careful selected process by which the class teacher utilizes the classroom accommodation space to promote teaching/learning effectiveness. When the classroom management and organization is inefficient, the teaching/learning experience becomes epileptic. This classroom management and organization is more demanding with the

invasion of the covid-19 pandemic with its attendant protocols that demanded more classroom furniture installations as well as other facilities meant to curb the spread of the deadly virus.

Management and Organization of Classroom in the Covid-19 Era

In other to curb the spread of this deadly corona virus infection, there is need for the teachers who manage classroom furniture and accommodation space to adhere to the new normal in carrying out their duties. New normal means to go extra mile in observing the covid-19 protocols in the classroom management and organization since people now have to live with the noxious disease. It goes beyond what use to be to where nature left us. This is brought about by the radical changes in the way of life which could be social, physical and psychological dimensions which has become the new way of life.

UNICEF (2020) acknowledged the importance of this new normal as a way of living with the virus and at the same time maintains a healthy living and recommended a number of basic principles as the schools' precautionary measures that the administrators, teachers and other staff should adhere to, for healthy school as under stated:

1. All human elements in the school should not be in school whenever they feel ill.
2. There should be hand washing facilities with running water and soap for both the school players and the visitors to wash their hands as well as sanitize their hands with sanitizer that have 99.9% alcoholic base. In the absence of sanitizer, chlorine solution could serve.
3. The scrubbing and sanitizing of the school exteriors should be on daily basis.
4. All schools should ensure adequate supply of water to be used for sanitation exercise more importantly decontamination of the entire premises. To this end, waste bins should be effectively managed through constant evacuation and disinfection.
5. Schools should maintain social distancing strategy by avoiding gathering of a large crowd.
6. Spacing out the students seating position to at least one metre away from one another.
7. Create awareness on the students about unnecessarily touching themselves as it triggers the spread of the virus.
8. Daily cleaning and disinfection of the classrooms particularly surface areas like windows, door handles, teaching aids and other learning materials.
9. Make sure there is free flow of air in the classroom preferably cross ventilation.

All these measures are put in place to guide against speedy spread of this communicable disease for students' well-being and improved academic performance. In managing classroom in the covid-19 era, the teacher in charge should ensure that the covid-19 facilities provided in the classroom should be well utilized to maintain healthy children therefore attain improved academic performance.

Improved Academic Performance

To improve means to enhance, foster, promote, progress, advance, expand etc. Academic performance is the extent the

child is able to grasp learned material. Academic performance is the resultant effect of teaching/learning effectiveness which may be poor or good. Improved academic performance is therefore the process of enhancing, fostering and promoting the child's learning behaviour. One of the ways of achieving such is through ensuring that the child is healthy especially in this covid-19 era. A healthy individual stands a better chance of assimilating and internalizing the learned materials and able to recall such when the need arises. When this is done, academic performance is heightened.

Reville (2018) gave weight to the above proclamation when the scholar accentuated that a healthy child is a better learner. This is unlike an individual who is feeling unwell with its attendant discomfort and highly indisposed for any type of learning. Similarly, Healthy school (2015) while aligning with the afore mentioned opinion credibly stated categorically that healthy students are desirous to attend school, display zeal and interest which ultimately results to excellent teaching/learning behaviour.

Apparently, when a child is healthy, the child is vibrant, active and curious which dictates the child's readiness to learn and grapple with ease the learned materials for enhanced academic performance. Sequel to the child's willingness to attend school, active classroom participation is envisaged, while the enrolment profile increases tremendously. It is based on this platform that the issue of ensuring strict adherence to covid-19 protocols in schools became mandatory as healthy children stand the chance of improved academic performance which is the hall mark of education enterprise.

Classroom Furniture and Accommodation Space

Classroom furniture entails all the in-built fixtures and facilities in the classroom that inspires and arouses the interest of both the teacher and the students for improved performance. These facilities include but not restricted to windows, tables and chairs, desks, ceiling, shelves/lockers, chalk/marker board etc. In support of the above listed classroom facilities, Agabi, Onyike, & Wali, (2013) added that instructional materials and lockers while maintaining that it is the duty of the teacher to organize and manage them to prosper teaching/learning outcome. It could be recalled that with advent of covid-19, the classroom accessories have been expanded to include washing hand facilities with running water, hand sanitizer, face masks and many others so as to keep in line with the new normal.

Classroom accommodation space is a term used to describe the class size. It is the entire area that makes up a classroom. It is the size of the classroom in relation to the number of the students per class. Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC, 2010) defined the classroom as the total number of the occupants which is the teacher/pupil ratio which is stipulated to be 20:1 in Pre-primary, 40:1 in the primary and 35:1 in the secondary schools. In other words, the expected number of pupils should be 20, 40, 35 for pre-primary, primary and secondary schools respectively. When the classroom is overcrowded, it could result to insufficient air which could lead to spread of transmissible diseases. Base on the heels of this development, Oluwuo, Anyamele & Akpan, (2015) noted with dismay that many schools lack sufficient shelter and

classroom space due to overcrowding consequently, suffer from noise and poor condition of learning equipment and apparatus in the laboratories, classroom and workshops. It is obvious that when the class size is large, the use of learning materials becomes cumbersome and could lead to damage of such. Stemming from the above declaration, Uwaezuoke (2020) while stressing on the impact of covid-19 pandemic on the education sector, posited that there is alarming upsurge in the procurement of educational resources such as more furniture, extension of current buildings and online facilities etc. to address the covid-19 protocols. The scholar also added that there is training and re-training of the staff to equip them with the new normal for onward transmission to the students for improved academic performances.

In view of the impact of convid-19 around the world and in Nigeria in particular coupled with its re-occurrence in waves, there is need to ensure the safety of the children in schools. The classroom houses all the children in their respective classes and therefore should be spacious in terms of classroom accommodation space. There should be cross ventilation which means that the installation of windows should be appropriately done to enable them have sufficient air and curb stuffy classroom with shortage of oxygen in-take which could also affect their rate of comprehension of learned materials. The class size should be drastically reduced to avoid over-crowdedness which escalates spread of communicable diseases. The seats should be adequately provided to make sure that the students are spaced out to conform with keeping the one-metre distance from the next person which the covid-19 protocol specified. Personal hygiene which has been hitherto swept under the carpet was reinvigorated. Washing of hands intermittently was advocated with running water and soap. The use of face masks was also enforced as well as constant use of hand sanitizer.

Statement of the Problem

Owing to the fact that the parents, teachers and other stake holders in education were curious about the health and safety of the children and other school players on post covid-19 lockdown schools resumption, adherence to safety principles becomes uppermost. According to them, the well-being of an individual supersedes their academics because it takes one who is alive to attend school. The study therefore is set out to examine the level of the availability of the recommended covid-19 classroom facilities/protocols, furniture and accommodation space in the public secondary schools in the covid-19 era in Aguata LGA of Anambra State. This is to ascertain whether the schools acquired National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) classroom facilities/protocols mandatory to all Nigerian schools upon school recommencement. Many parents were sceptical in sending their children back to school due to uncertainty that these facilities/protocols may not be observed. There is absolute need to allay the fear of the parents and other school players hence the study.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to investigate classroom management and organization in public secondary schools in the covid-19 era for improved academic performance in Aguata LGA of Anambra State. To be specific, the study is meant to:

1. Find out the level of availability of covid-19 classroom furniture

provision and classroom accommodation space in public secondary schools in the covid-19 era in Aguata LGA of Anambra State.

2. Investigate the level of availability of covid-19 classroom facilities/protocols in public secondary schools in the covid-19 era in Aguata LGA of Anambra State.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of the availability of furniture provision and classroom accommodation space available in public secondary schools in the covid-19 era in Aguata LGA of Anambra State?

2. What is the level of availability of classroom covid-19 facilities/protocols in public secondary schools in the covid-19 era in Aguata LGA of Anambra State?

Research Method

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population made up of 824 teachers from 21 public secondary schools in Aguata LGA of Anambra State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 10% from 10 selected public secondary schools for the study. The respondents are these teachers from the selected 10 schools numbering 368. The instrument was self-designed and titled"Covid-19 Classroom Management Questionnaire" (CCMQ). Content and face validity was ensured. The reliability index of 0.82 was obtained through Cronbach Alpha Statistics. The instrument was a modified Likert type of scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), Very Low Extent (VLE) which was subjected to mean and standard deviation (SD) to answer the research questions. The weighted mean is calculated based on the 4+3+2+1=10/4=2.5. In line with this process, any score that fall from 2.5 and above is considered high extent (HE) while all score below 2.5 is taken as low extent (LE). The distribution of the instrument was done by the researcher along with two research assistants. The total number of the questionnaire distributed was 368 while 345 were retrieved at the end of the exercise and utilized for the analysis.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What is the extent of the availability of furniture and classroom accommodation space provision in public secondary schools in the covid-19 era in Aguata LGA of Anambra State?

Table 1 showing the response of the participants on the extent of the availability of furniture and classroom accommodation space in public secondary schools in the covid-19 era in Aguata LGA of Anambra State.

	Item Statement: **To what extent are the following Classroom furniture and Accommodation space available in your class in this covid-19 era.**			
S/N		**Mean**	**SD**	**Remark**
1	Sufficient desks for the students	2.8	0.9	HE
2	There is good ventilation in the Classroom	2.7	1.1	HE
3	The teacher/student ratio is 1: 35	2.7	1.2	HE
4	The classroom accommodation space is normal	2.6	1.1	HE

5	Students are seated a meter apart from each other	1.96	0.9	LE
6	The ceiling boards are in good shape	2.4	1.0	LE
7	The floor is cemented/tiled	2.3	1.1	LE
8	The classroom is furniture is functional for comfort.	2.2	1.1	LE
9	Seats arranged one meter apart for the students	1.8	0.9	
10	Good table and chair for the teacher	2.2	1.2	LE
	Grand mean	2.34	1.1	LE

Table 1 shows that the participants on the available classroom furniture and accommodation space in classroom management and organization in covid-19 era accepted to a low extent the availability of most items with mean rating scores stretching from 2.4 to 1.8 and the corresponding SD of 1.0 and 0.9. On the revise side, only four items accepted the availability of desks, good ventilation, teacher/student ratio and normal class to an acceptable extent with mean rating scores fluctuating from 2.8 to 2.6 with the SD equivalent of 0.9 to 1.1. The aggregate mean and SD of 2.3 and 1.1 respectively which depicts that covid-19 classroom furniture and accommodation space are available at a low extent.

Research Question 2: What is the extent of practices of classroom covid-19 facilities/protocols in public secondary schools in the covid-19 era in Aguata LGA of Anambra State?

Grand mean and SD	1.8	0.85	Rejected

Table 2 showing the response of the respondents on the extent of practices of classroom covid-19 facilities/protocols in public secondary schools in the covid-19 era in Aguata LGA of Anambra State.

S/N	**To what extent are the following classroom covid-19 protocols observed in your class.**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Remark**
1	Students temperature are checked before entry into the classroom.	1.85	0.9	LE
2	There is compulsory wearing of nose masks	1.32	0.6	LE
3	There is running water and soap for Frequent washing of hands.	1.3	0.5	LE
4	There is constant cleaning of surface areas like windows, door handles, teaching aids with disinfectants.	1.6	0.7	LE
5	Students do not touch one another at random	2.0	0.9	LE
6	The waste bin is disposed regularly and disinfected	1.8	0.9	LE
7	Students maintain physical distance while in the class (one meter away).	1.96	0.9	LE
8	The classroom is mopped and disinfected on daily basis.	1.8	0.88	LE
9	Students do not share items with one another	2.1	1.0	LE
10	Sick students are advised to stay home	2.5	0.9	HE
	Grand mean	1.85	0.9	LE

Table 2 indicates that the participants to a low extent admitted that covid-19 classroom facilities/protocols were not available in public secondary schools in the

area under study with the mean rating scores ranging from 2.1 – 1.6 on items with serial numbers 1-9 which fall below the criterion mean of 2.5 with the corresponding SD of 1.1 – 0.7. It is only item 10 that accepted to high extent that sick students are advised to stay home with the mean score of 2.5 which is within the benchmark of 2.5 with the SD of 0.9. The grand mean and SD stood at 1.8 to 0.35 which is the score for a low extent.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the result analysis stated above, the first finding of this study is that the classroom furniture and accommodation space are not adequately provided in public secondary schools studied. Covid-19 is a deadly virus which is highly contagious and as such needed utmost care to curb the upsurge of the communicable disease through keeping physical distance from the next person. This can only be achieved in the classroom where children are spaced out which translates to sufficiency in the provision of classroom furniture and accommodation space. This is what informs the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) (2020) in collaboration with Presidential Task Force (PFA) to mandate all Nigerian schools to expand the classroom structures and provide adequate furniture before schools' recommencement. When the classroom is not spacious, the students are crowded and scamper for the scarce furniture the resultant effect is stuffy classroom with insufficient air this is why UBEC (2010) pegged the class size at 35 for secondary schools. In the event of any communicable disease such as covid-19 the entire class is endangered. This observation is not different from what Ohia & Obasi (2016) and Oluwuo, Anyamele, &Akpan (2015) detected when the scholars posited lack of classroom accommodation space has irreversible repercussion on the students well-being as well as academic performance and advised teachers to effectively manage these classroom accessories where they are available.

The second finding of the study is that most of the covid-19 classroom facilities/protocols were absolutely not provided in public secondary schools studied. This is endangering the lives of both the students and other school players especially the teachers. This is evinced when UNICEF (2020) recognized the impending dangers of this ailment and recommended some classroom facilities and protocols in other to move on with life through the new normal initiative. It takes a healthy child to learn (Reville, 2018) while a sick child is passive in class thus unproductive.

Conclusion

Following the afore-mentioned revelations from the study, it is concluded that the covid-19 precautionary measures in public secondary schools are microscopically provided. This has exposed the lives of the students and other school element to impending danger of contacting the lethal disease. This hampers the educational delivery process thus bastardizing improved performance.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government and/or appropriate agency should ensure there is supervision and monitoring of schools to ensure that necessary covid-19 mandate are met in schools or risk closure. This stands to inspire schools that are not yet covid-19 new normal compliance to

be in line for improved performance.

2. The government should deem it fit to execute their mandate in respect of NCDC covid-19 facilities provision and protocols. This is even more crucial when the deadly virus is turning out in waves to avert the impending danger this non-provision of these facilities may cause our children and the entire nation at large.

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