



Roles Of Principals And Teachers In The Management Of Safety And Health For Service Delivery In Selected Senior Secondary Schools In Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

Safety and health is a prerequisite for effective service delivery in the school system. Thus, principals and teachers have full obligations towards protecting the environment and the affairs of the schools. The study therefore examined roles of principals and teachers in the management of safety and health for service delivery in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Three Research questions and two hypotheses were drawn for the study. The population of the study consists of 88 principals and 1677 teachers from forty four (44) senior secondary schools in three selected local government areas (Obio/Akpor, Port-Harcourt and Ikwerre) in Rivers State. The sample size was 526. Sampling technique was based on random sampling technique in which 30% of the total population was selected for the study. A self-made instrument entitled, Roles of Principals and Teachers in the Management of Safety and Health Questionnaire (RPTMSHQ) was developed for the study. Responses were based on the Likert typed scale (4-point rating) in which the respondents were requested to answer: strongly agreed (SA), agreed (A) Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD). The results indicated that the principals and the teachers' roles in management of safety and management have significant relationship with the extent of teaching and learning in senior secondary schools. It was therefore recommended that foolproof safety systems be designed and incorporated into the educational system to ensure the implementation of management and safety principles.

Keywords: safety and health, teachers, schools, principals, educational system

INTRODUCTION

Safety referred to precaution taken to prevent accident, harm, danger, damage, loss and environmental pollution while health is conceived as state of complete physical, mental and social well-being (Rio and Jain, 2011). These concepts have become very fundamental in the achievement of predetermined objectives in the school system.

Schools are changing therefore responsibilities for safety and health management are being refocused. Safety is important and needs to be approached creatively. A planned approach to managing safety and health has to be seen not just to prevent accidents but to build a culture of sensible risk management strategies that will enhance service delivery (Dancan and Simatwa,2010).

Safety and health principle is the concern of every individual in the school system. Thus, the principals and teachers have to develop good planning measures to avoid work hazards. In other words, the principals and the teachers have to collaborate on the issues of health and safety within the school system especially checking the students' behavior, security matters, sport activities, welfare of both the teachers and students, external invasions on the school activities as well as overseeing the general nature of teaching/learning. For the actualization the fundamental issues, committees have to be set up for effective management, supervision and inspection. This is done for the avoidance of any risk that may arise in the process of implementation (Health and Safety Authority, 2006).

Review of the Related Literature

A safe and healthy workplace is one of the keys to success. By establishing good health and safety practices in the schools, teachers and students are likely to be more motivated and productive in their academic activities (USAID, 2008).

The principals and teachers understand that management of safety and health in secondary schools require a systematic approach and stringent assessment and auditing of risks (Simatwa, 2007). Ethically, part of the schools' overall values is to keep staff and visitors safe. The principals in collaboration with the teachers established some of the measures that will help to eliminate casualties or injuries to the school communities. For instance, during sport activities, committee is set up to manage injuries and casualties. Even in the classroom situation, nature of the sitting arrangement and ventilation is taken into recognition. Unhealthy classroom situation can equally affect the process of teaching and learning. Operationally, it helps avoid costly accidents, disruptions and damages to the morale and reputation of teachers and students.

In the school system, principals and teachers often perceived safety as a continuous planned process, an integral part of the management activities. This means that efficient service delivery require inculcating the importance of safe and health management. As revealed by Rio etal (2011) a single injury cause by an individual can have negative effects on the whole organization such as inflammation emanating from science laboratory or missing of students or teachers during field strip. Hence, the school has to develop a clear policy that is actually understood by students and other stakeholders. This is predicated on the fact that when safety and health of individual are guarantee, job performance will attain the expected outcomes.

With changing responsibilities, principals need to be more effective in safety and health management for effective service delivery. These responsibilities includes: ensuring that facilities and equipment are safe and in good working order, the development of overall school disciplinary policies and its enforcement as well as assigning responsibilities to school personnel. Policies on management of safety and health involves securities of the infrastructures, establishing code that guide the behavior of the stakeholders, providing of first aids and supportive medical centers, fire safety, provision of statutory records for identifications of any events within the schools and maintenance of school facilities.

Researches indicated that Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974 imposes duties on all employers to ensure good assessment and management of risks. Thus, principals and teachers' role on safety matters stem from both the Factory Act 1990 (Cap 126) and the Labor Act 1990 (Cap 198) of the Federation of Nigeria, which specified some safety precautions of the employers of labor (Kalagbor, 2012). This, therefore, informs the school authorities on the legal practices to undertake certain action for risk management. The legal practices and its scope of the policies of course revolve around safe school facilities, disaster management, prevention of pollution and risk reduction. Each of these requires separate tracking because the types of policies, decision-making authority, resources, expertise and implementing actors are substantially different.

Statement of the problems

In every education system, service delivery only takes place when the environment is organized and coordinated. For instance, participation is effective and efficient administration is assured when there is conducive atmosphere that guarantee safety. Based on the nature of educational system at all levels, policies, codes of conducts and legal practices are established to manage any risks emanated within the school system, However, there are still persistent of unhealthy situations like deplorable classrooms, stink latrine, injuries from collapsed buildings, bullying, stealing, cultists inflicting deadly attacked, air pollution etc. All these, one way or the other create unhealthy situation hence making service delivery very difficult and unrealizable. This therefore inform the researcher to investigate roles of principals and teachers in the management of safety and health for service delivery in senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate roles of principals and teachers in the management of safety and health for service delivery in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research questions

- What are the roles of principals and teachers on management of safety and health management in senior secondary schools?
- What are the strategies utilized by principals and teachers for effective management of safety and health management in senior secondary schools?
- What are the constraints for effective management of safety and health in senior secondary schools for service delivery?

Hypotheses

- There is no significant difference between principal and teacher roles in the management of safety/ health in senior secondary schools.
- There is no significant difference in the strategies utilized by principals and teachers for effective management of safety /health management in senior secondary schools.

METHODOLOGY

The study is a survey design intended to investigate roles of principals and teachers in the management of safety and health for service delivery in selected senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The population of the study consists of 88 principals and 1677 teachers from forty four (44) senior secondary schools in three selected local government areas (Obio/Akpor, Port-Harcourt and Ikwerre) in Rivers State. The sample size was 526. Sampling technique was based on random sampling technique in which 30% of the total population was selected for the study. A self-made instrument entitled, Roles of Principals and Teachers in the Management of Safety and Health Questionnaire (RPTMSHQ) was developed for the study. Thus, one single questionnaire was developed for principals and teachers. Responses were based on the Likert typed scale (4 point rating) in which the respondents were requested to answer: strongly agreed (SA), agreed (A) Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD). The researchers in collaboration with other teachers administered the questionnaires to the respondents. Thus, 526 copies of the questionnaires were distributed and retrieved 432 (82%) for the analysis of the research questions and hypotheses. Frequency counts, mean scores and descriptive tables were used for the data analysis while z-test was used for the hypotheses.

RESULTS

Research question 1: *What are the roles of principals and teachers towards management of safety and health management in senior secondary schools?*

Table 1: Weighted responses on roles of principals and teachers towards management of safety and health.

S/No	Items	Principals			Teachers		
		N	\bar{X}	Rank order	N	\bar{X}	Rank order
1	Providing good health and safety practices in school enhance motivation and productivity	35	3.7	2 nd	397	3.5	1 st
2	integral part of the management activities	35	3.5	4 th	397	3.5	1 st
3	Reducing serious impacts of injury and illness on employees	35	3.6	3 rd	397	3.1	3 rd
4	Safeguard of teachers and students from causalities.	35	3.4	5 th	397	3.2	2 nd
5	Ensure proper maintenance of school properties or facilities.	35	3.8	1 st	397	3.5	1 st
	Aggregate mean score		3.6			3.4	

Table 1 shows the mean scores roles of principals and teachers towards management of safety and health in senior secondary schools. Principals agree to 1-5 with high mean scores of 3.8, 3.7, 3.6, 3.5 and 3.4 respectively following the ranking order ranging from 1-5 which are greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. Teachers agree to items 1-5 with high mean scores of 3.5,3.5,3.5,3.2 and 3.1 respectively following the ranking order ranging from 1-3 which are greater than the criterion mean of 2.5.

The aggregate mean scores of 3.6 for principals and 3.4 for teachers show that the respondents accepted the items in the table to be the perception of principals and teachers towards management of safety and health management in senior secondary schools. Therefore, the roles of the principals and teachers include: providing good health and safety practices in school to enhance motivation and productivity, conceiving health and safety as an integral part of the management activities, ensuring proper maintenance of school properties or facilities, safeguard of teachers and students as well as reduce the sometimes serious impacts of injury and illness on employees.

Research question 2: *What are the strategies utilized by principals and teachers for effective management of safety and health management in senior secondary schools?*

Table 2: Weighted responses on strategies for management of safety and health

S/No	Items	Principals			teachers		
		N	\bar{X}	Rank order	N	\bar{X}	Rank order
1	Establishing code that guide the behavior of the stakeholders	35	3.7	1 st	397	3.3	3 rd
2	Providing of first aids and supportive medical centers	35	3.6	2 nd	397	3.3	3 rd
3	Provision of statutory records for identifications of any events within the schools	35	3.3	5 th	397	3.7	1 st
4	Having the right policy organization and arrangements in place	35	3.5	3 rd	397	3.4	2 nd
5	Undertaking suitable and sufficient risk assessment	35	3.4	4 th	397	3.4	2 nd
	Aggregate mean score		3.3			3.4	

Table 2 shows the mean scores of principals and teachers on the strategies utilized by principals and teachers for effective management of safety and health management in senior secondary schools. Principals agree to 1-5 with high mean scores of 3.7,3.6,3.4,3.5 and 3.3 respectively following the ranking order ranging from 1-5 which are greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. Teachers agree to items 1-5 with high mean scores of 3.7,3.4,3.4,3.3 and 3.3 respectively following the ranking order ranging from 1-3 which are greater than the criterion mean of 2.5.

The aggregate mean scores of 3.3 for principals and 3.4 for teachers show that the respondents accepted all items to be the strategies utilized by principals and teachers for effective management of safety and health management in senior secondary schools. Therefore, the strategies utilize are: establishing code that guide the behavior of the stakeholders, providing of first aids and supportive medical centers, provision of statutory records for identifications of any events within the schools, having the right policy organization and arrangements in place and undertaking suitable and sufficient risk assessment.

Research question 3: *What are the constraints for effective management of safety and health in senior secondary schools for service delivery?*

Table 3: Weighted responses on constraints on management of safety and health

S/No	Items	Principals			Teachers		
		N	\bar{X}	Rank order	N	\bar{X}	Rank Order
1	Lack of implementation of school safety policies	35	3.7	1 st	397	3.4	2 nd
2	School building is overcrowded and had only one exit	35	2.9	5 th	397	3.1	4 th
3	Lack of adequate knowledge of safety and health measures	35	3.1	4 th	397	3.5	1 st
4	Lack of collaboration between heath inspector and the school authorities	35	3.4	3 rd	397	3.2	3 rd
5	Students not enlightened on adequate management of health and safety risks	35	3.6	2 nd	397	3.4	2 nd
	Aggregate mean score		3.34			3.32	

Table 3 shows the mean scores of principals and teachers on constraints for effective management of safety and health in senior secondary schools for service delivery. Principals agree to 1-5 with high mean scores of 3.7,3.6,3.4,3.1 and 2.9 respectively following the ranking order ranging from 1-5 which are greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. Teachers agree to items 1-5 with high mean scores of 3.5,3.4,3.4,3.5 and 3.3 respectively following the ranking order ranging from 1-4 which are greater than the criterion mean of 2.5.

The aggregate mean scores of 3.34 for principals and 3.32 for teachers show that the respondents accepted the items in the table to be the constraints for effective management of safety and health in senior secondary schools for service delivery. Therefore the constraints are: lack of the implementation of school safety policies, school building is overcrowded and had only one exit, lack of collaboration between health inspector and the school authorities and students not enlightened on adequate management of health and safety risks.

Test of hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the role principals and teachers in the management of safety/health in senior secondary schools.

Table 4: Z-test on roles of principals and teachers on management of safety/ health

Respondents	N	Std	Df	z-cal	z-crit	Level of sign.	Decision
Principals	35	0.49	430	0.04	1.96	0.05	significant
Teachers	397	0.75					

The result of table 4 indicated that the calculated z-cal (0.04) was less than the z-critical (1.96) at the degree of freedom (430) and 0.05 significant levels. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the roles of principals and teachers in the management of safety/ health in senior secondary schools was rejected.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the strategies utilized by principals’ and teachers’ for effective management of safety /health management in senior secondary schools.

Table 5: z-test on strategies utilized for effective management of safety and health

Respondents	N	Std	Df	z-cal	z-crit	Level of sign	Decision
Principals	35	3.5	430	0.59	1.96	0.05	significant
Teachers	397	3.4					

The results in table 5 indicated that the calculated z-cal (0.59) was less than the z-critical (2.78) at the degree of freedom (430) and 0.05 significant levels. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the strategies utilized by principals and teachers for effective management of safety /health management in senior secondary schools was rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study revealed that principals and teachers perceived management of safety and health as a process of enhancing motivation and productivity, integral parts of administration, process of safeguarding of teachers and students from causalities and proper maintenance of school properties or facilities. The test of hypothesis indicated significance difference in the perception principals and teachers

on safety and health management. This implies that school personnel are aware of the fundamental reasons for managing safety and management service delivery. This finding agrees with the assertion of USAID (2008) that conceived safe and healthy workplace as one of the keys to business success. By establishing good health and safety practices in the workplace, school businesses are likely to have more motivated and productive employees, lower absenteeism rates and fewer business reductions and disruptions.

The findings of the study also revealed that the strategies utilized by principals and teachers for effective management of safety and health management in senior secondary schools reflects on establishing code that guide the behavior of the stakeholders. It further reflects on providing first aids and supportive medical centers, provision of statutory records for identifications of any events within the schools, having the right policy organization and arrangements in place and Undertaking suitable and sufficient risk assessment. The test of hypothesis two revealed that significant differences exist in the strategies utilized in the management of safety and health in the school system. The fact remains that principals and teachers are acquainted with these strategies but the facilities to mitigate the effects are not available. This view is in consonance with the perception of Rio et al. (2011) who stated that school has to develop clear policies actually understood by students and other stakeholders. Thus, when safety and health of the individual are guaranteed, job performance will attain the expected outcomes.

Finally, it is revealed that the constraints against effective management of safety and health includes: lack of the implementation of school safety policies, non maintenance of school buildings, lack of adequate knowledge of safety and health measures, lack of collaboration between health inspectors and the school authorities on risks management and assessment. As stated by Kalagbor (2012), understanding and recognition of health Safety at Work Act of 1974 and Factory Act 1990 (Cap 126) and the Labor Act 1990 (Cap 198) of the Federation of Nigeria will ensure adequate management of risks that arise in the job occupation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it was therefore concluded that principals and teachers have to collaborate in management of health and safety policies in order to avert some of the risks that may arise in the processes of service delivery by the school personnel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Principals, teachers and students should be trained on the safety and health management.
- Disaster risk reduction should be integrated holistically and taught as part of school curricula from pre-school through secondary school.
- Ensure that school principals and teachers use non-violent teaching and learning strategies and adopt classroom management and disciplinary measures that are not based on fear, threats, humiliation or physical force.
- Ensure that curricula, teaching processes and other practices are in full conformity with the provisions and principles of human rights.

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