

PROVISIONS OF CLUSTER STAFF RESIDENTIAL QUARTERS FOR QUALITY EDUCATION DELIVERY IN UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION (UBE) SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

This study examined provisions of cluster staff residential quarters for quality education in Universal Basic Education (UBE) schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised all 1,262 head teachers and principals distributed over the 1,262 approved public UBE schools in Rivers State. Out of this population, 301 were principals of public junior secondary schools and 961 were head teachers of public primary schools within the 23 Local Government Areas of Rivers State. A sample of 465 respondents (175 principals and 290 head teachers), which represents 37% of the population was drawn using stratified sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured 20-item questionnaire tagged: "Provisions of Cluster Staff Residential Quarters for Quality Education Delivery Questionnaire (PCSRQQEDQ)." The questionnaire was structured after the four-point modified Likert rating scale, and was duly validated by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was tested using the Cronbach's Alpha statistics, and the coefficients of .78 and .80 were obtained for the two clusters respectively. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while z-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed, among others, that ways cluster staff residential quarters can be provided to enhance quality education delivery in UBE schools in Rivers State include: ensuring that only teachers who are in need of quarters are given priority; provisions of single family bungalow for less crowded families; semi-detached bungalows should be provided for bigger families; conducting needs assessment analysis of teachers in the quarters and ensuring total elimination of duplication allocation. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that government, public-private sectors, stakeholders, philanthropists, non-governmental organisations, among others should collaborate in providing cluster staff residential quarters in order to enhance quality education delivery in UBE schools.

Keywords: *Provision, Staff, Cluster, Residential, Quarters, Quality, Education*

Introduction

Education has been widely recognised as a vital transformational tool and a formidable instrument for socioeconomic empowerment. This is because education is capable of influencing the productivity and living standard of a nation. It is a collective social effort which ensures that every citizen becomes a useful and functional member of the society. The value of the educational products depends largely on the quality of the delivery of it. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisations (2014) defined quality education in terms of five key aspects: learner, environment, content, process and outcome. These aspects simply revolve around the quality of the teacher who transforms the process for positive outcomes. The roles and responsibilities of the teachers cannot be over emphasised in the education system. The implementation of educational curriculum and character building are the main tasks which keep teachers in the forefront. Annan (2020) emphasised that teachers are the doorways to literate communities. Husain (2015) asserted that there is no point providing an opportunity for a child to be schooled if the quality to make that child a useful agent in the society is missing in the education system. Any society that does not value its teachers will never bring about any socioeconomic and political development. Thus, the ultimate goal of any organisation is to deliver quality service that will satisfy its customers/clients.

The Universal Basic Education Programme (UBE) was adopted in Nigeria in 2004 to ensure that every Nigerian child receives free, universal, uninterrupted and compulsory education. The UBE encompasses primary and junior secondary education for all children (covering the first nine years of schooling- Basics 1 to 9), nomadic education and literacy and non-formal education. In Rivers State, the UBE Act was passed into law in 2005 after that of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 2004. According to Ajayi and Adeyemi (2011), the policy which is capital intensive requires the government to provide adequately for basic education in the area of organisation, funding, staff development, facilities including staff quarters, among others. With the commencement of the UBE programme, the Rivers State Government has been making concerted efforts in the area of physical facilities provisions in order to provide qualitative education to learners and enhance teachers' optimal performance in attaining the educational goals and objectives.

Despite the Nigerian Government's efforts to improve access and quality of education for its citizenry, education quality still remains a daunting challenge. Some researchers: Anna (2020); Ameyaw (2011); Akyeampong (2015) were of the view that the deterioration in education quality and gradual decline of pupils' progress might be the result of government's quest to massively expand education to address the issue of access. Hence, it should be noted that access to education without quality is a waste of time and resources. World Bank (2013) posits that there is considerable evidence that teacher motivation such as salary, working conditions, promotions, among others may be the most critical element of effective teacher performance. Obanya (2014) maintained that teachers are the drivers of the education system, and quality education delivery depends solely on them. Lending credence to this assertion, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) stipulated in the National Policy on Education that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers. Thus, teachers are the most important factor in determining the quality of education that learners receive in the education system.

Quality education is the education that has high standard, relevance, and also meets the needs and aspirations of the society. Quality education delivery is expected to meet set standards, create values and meet the expectations of a knowledge-based society (Obanya, 2014). Teachers play vital roles in ensuring quality education delivery. When quality education is delivered high enough to meet set standards, the products of education will be able to perform optimally and compete favourably in the world of work. The quality of education delivery is measured by students' academic performance. If students' academic achievement is low, it is translated to low quality of the education system. Obemeata (1995, as cited in Olorunsola, 2014) asserted that quality education is often linked with indicators such as: quality teachers, improved curriculum, good delivery, quality infrastructures, conducive learning environments, provision of adequate learning materials, training and re-training of teachers, improved teacher-student ratio, quality outputs, among others. Hence, quality education delivery is one that involves a trained and motivated teacher who perceives that his/her welfare is prioritised by the government.

Teacher motivation in Nigeria has been alarmingly deteriorating at all levels (Udechukwu, 2019). Averting the challenge of quality requires reforms in teacher welfare (Oladimeji, 2016). In recognition of the fact that teachers are the critical change agents, the Rivers State Government has made attempts to provide and renovate some housing quarters for teachers. However, a cursory look at the UBE schools reveals that the residential quarters are quite few, and cannot accommodate the teeming numbers of teachers who want to live inside the school premises in order to save cost as the cost of living in the urban areas are becoming too unbearable. In corroboration, Taiwo (2019) asserted that when the work force perceives that their working conditions have improved, they will definitely put in their best to achieve the educational goals and objectives. Annan (2020) posited that greater access to education should not in any way affect the quality of it; otherwise, the purpose of education will be defeated, and the populace will only receive education that makes them alien in their own land. Quality in education according to Asare (2019), can be achieved in many ways, and one of the ways is the relationship that exists between the transmitter (teacher) and the recipient (learner). Thus, the role of the teacher in knowledge transmission is vital in this knowledge-based economy era.

According to UNESCO (2014), four strategies are crucial in providing quality teachers for quality education. These are as follows: recruit the best candidate from a pool of applicants, train the teacher well (before and

on the job), allocate teachers effectively to disadvantaged areas through proper incentive packages and reduce teacher attrition through improved working conditions and flexible career progression pathways. Provision of good working conditions for both teaching and non-teaching staff can go a long way to ensuring quality education delivery. Asare (2019) opined that there must be a paradigm shift from the old methods of administration to a new approach which addresses the very needs of the times we find ourselves. To improve the situation of urban low income housing situation, Rivers State Government must be able to provide low-income housing for teachers, and additional houses for the increase in teacher population. Teacher welfare must occupy a central stage in the education agenda in this competitive era.

Cluster staff residential quarters otherwise known as staff housing is referred to as residential apartments built for teachers in educational institution. Cluster (or Clustering) is a site-planning technique that concentrates buildings and structures in specific areas on a plot, site, or parcel to allow the remaining land to be used for recreation, open space, or preservation of features or structures with environmental, historical, cultural, or other significance. Odediran et al. (2012) defined cluster houses as types of houses that are built in a complex and consist of tens to hundreds of housing units. This type of house generally has a uniform shape and size and does not have a fence on the front. One house and another house are only separated by a concrete wall. Apart from having a similar house design, cluster housing is generally equipped with quite complete supporting facilities such as security, parks, sports fields, and so on. Many people tend to choose this type of house because it has a good and closed security system (Oladimeji, 2016). In other words, nobody can enter this residential area without permission from security personnel.

Providing cluster staff residential quarters for teachers will solve the problems of housing, safety, transport fares, spending their meagre salaries on fuelling their cars, rushing to sign attendance, among others. Osabutey (2023); Bradone (2021) opined that housing, also referred to as shelter is one of the fundamental human rights, and it forms an essential part of human settlement with great impact on health, welfare, productivity and quality of life. The provision of adequate affordable housing for Nigerians will initiate a notable growth as it will provide shelter for the people and also, bring about lots of infrastructural development, thereby meeting some of the social needs of the populace (Udechukwu, 2019). Oladimeji (2016) conducted a study on staff housing scheme and discovered that teachers who reside within the school premises have more job satisfaction than those who operate from the neighbourhood. In another dimension, Mohammad et al. (2016) conducted a study on teacher factors affecting the performance of female teachers in Pakistan, and found out that teachers' salary packages are not adequate to meet minimum basic needs for food, housing, clothing, education and transport. Thus, provisions of staff residential quarters can go a long way in enhancing quality education delivery.

In Rivers State, the influx of migrants has created scarcity of housing/ accommodations and high cost of renting apartments. Because of this, the Rivers State Government and individuals have taken it upon themselves to mitigate these housing problems. Osabutey (2023) noted that the high cost of house rents in urban areas has continued to pose a challenge to teachers who struggle to satisfy their basic needs with their meagre salaries. Iyi (2014) observed that the cost of rents has become so high that most teachers who live in the cosmopolitan cities have resorted to living in shanties, slums and other unhealthy environments. Emodi and Emeka (2018) observed that provisions of staff quarters can mitigate the challenges of high cost of house rents, problems of traffic congestion, poor waste disposal, shortage of water and inadequate power supply. This scenario is also visible in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Taiwo (2019) argued that quarters are intended to ease the mobility of teachers to schools and also alleviate the financial burden of the school staff in finding their accommodations.

Provision of securities is integral to the human life. Whyte (2019) posited that School Management priorities are to ensure effective leadership, coordination, advocacy and operational delivery of security in cluster quarters. Iyi (2014) opined that security of clusters brings together security partners who have the necessary expertise, resources, access and capacity to manage security related activities in cluster residential quarters. Management of security clusters should be proactive in order to prevent and respond to human violations and meet the security needs of affected populations in a coordinated and predictable manner (Albany, 2018). Nwideduh and Adieme (2017) suggested that school administrators should

involve the host communities in security activities so as to avoid robbery attacks and vandalising school facilities. Bradone (2021) noted that it is important that the staff quarters provide occupants with comfortable, conducive, safe, healthy and secured environment. McNamara (2020) asserted that government is expected to do its utmost to fill critical gaps in funding, providing adequate security to schools, mobilize resources and meet security challenges. Thus, it is very important to ensure safety and security of staff in the cluster quarters because it will enable them to concentrate on their teaching tasks more effectively; thereby delivering quality education.

Statement of the Problem

Shelter and safety are basic needs of man. When he perceives that these needs are adequately provided, he will put in his efforts in whatever he does and achieve effectiveness. Regrettably, in recent times, educational stakeholders have been attributing lack of habitable residential staff quarters, where teachers can effectively operate from, as one of the major factors of low quality or standard of education in Nigeria, particularly in Rivers State. It appears many UBE schools in Rivers State do not have adequate facilities for staff residence as it used to be in the earlier years when education has more quality. Besides, the ones that have, their buildings are in deplorable conditions and not managed properly. Many staff, especially those in the urban areas reside far away from the location of their schools; hence, they are compelled to be in traffic on a daily basis to and fro school amidst the overcrowded and ever congested streets and bad roads.

At some point, the Rivers State Government in an effort to attend to some pressing needs of the citizenry, embarked upon achieving education goals by building of roads, with the hope that this may ease the traffic situations on the roads and streets. At the peak and rush hours for work, many teaching staff may be trapped in the grid-lock that is characterised by city lives, and by the time they eventually get to work, they will be unproductive. Thus, this scenario can result in lack of punctuality, absenteeism, playing truants, excuses, burn-out, fatigue, poor attitudes to work, lack of commitment, poor learning outcomes, among others. With these, no doubt, quality education delivery will be far-fetched!

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to examine how cluster staff residential quarters can be provided for quality education delivery in UBE public schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine ways cluster staff residential quarters can be provided for quality education delivery in UBE schools in Rivers State; and
2. find out ways security can be provided to enhance cluster staff residential quarters for quality education delivery in UBE schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. In what ways can cluster staff residential quarters be provided for quality education delivery in UBE schools in Rivers State?
2. In what ways can security be provided to enhance cluster staff residential quarters for quality education delivery in UBE schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and head teachers on ways cluster staff residential quarters can be provided for quality education delivery in UBE schools in Rivers State.
- Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and head teachers on ways security can be provided to can enhance cluster staff residential quarters for quality education delivery in UBE schools in Rivers State.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised all 1,262 head teachers and principals distributed over the 1,262 approved public UBE schools in Rivers State. Out of this population, 301 are principals of public junior secondary schools and 961 are head teachers of public primary

schools within the 23 Local Government Areas of Rivers State (Universal Basic Education Board, Port Harcourt, 2022). A sample of 465 respondents (175 principals and 290 head teachers), which represents 37% of the population was drawn using stratified sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured 20-item questionnaire tagged: “Provisions of Cluster Staff Residential Quarters for Quality Education Delivery Questionnaire (PCSRQQEDQ).” The questionnaire was structured after the four-point modified Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree = 4 points, Agree = 3 points, Disagree = 2 points and Strongly Disagree = 1 point, respectively. The instrument was duly validated by three experts in Test and Measurement Department and Educational Management Department of Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt. The reliability of the instrument was tested using the Cronbach’s Alpha method to establish the internal consistency of the questionnaire items, and the coefficients of .81 and .82 were obtained for the two clusters respectively; hence, they were adjudged to be reliable for the field study. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: In what ways can cluster staff residential quarters be provided for quality education delivery in UBE schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean (\bar{X}) and Standard Deviation (Sd) on the Opinions of Principals and Head Teachers on Ways Cluster Staff Residential Quarters can be Provided for Quality Education Delivery in UBE Schools In Rivers State

S/N	Ways Cluster Staff Residential Quarters can be Provided Include:	Principals = 185			Head Teachers = 290		
		\bar{X}	Sd	Decision	\bar{X}	Sd	Decision
1.	Ensuring that only teachers who are in need of quarters are given priority.	2.56	.92	Agreed	2.4	.54	Disagreed
2.	Teachers should not sub-rent their apartments.	3.25	.71	Agreed	2.46	.66	Disagreed
3.	Provisions of single family bungalow for less crowded families.	2.69	.91	Agreed	2.43	.81	Disagreed
4.	There should be teachers’ commitment to work cooperatively with other residents.	3.06	.87	Agreed	2.93	.26	Agreed
5.	There should be teachers’ willingness to contribute to cluster strategic response plan.	3.12	.75	Agreed	3.24	.53	Agreed
6.	Semi detached bungalows should be provided for bigger families.	2.64	.79	Agreed	2.89	.43	Agreed
7.	Teachers’ understanding of responsibilities associated with cluster participation.	2.67	.64	Agreed	3.07	.52	Agreed
8.	Conducting needs assessment analysis of teachers in the quarters.	2.66	1.02	Agreed	3.01	.366	Agreed
9.	Ensuring total elimination of duplication allocation.	2.74	.72	Agreed	3.11	.62	Agreed
10.	Reporting any significant change in the human situation.	3.16	.92	Agreed	3.06	.25	Agreed
Aggregate Mean/Sd		2.85			2.86		

Table 1 revealed that the principals agreed to items with serial numbers 1 to 10 as the ways cluster staff residential quarters can be provided to enhance quality education delivery in UBE schools in Rivers State. Similarly, items with serial numbers 4 to 10 were agreed by head teachers because their mean values are above the criterion mean value of 2.50. Contrary, items with serial numbers 1, 2 and 3 were disagreed by the head teachers because they have mean values below the criterion mean value of 2.50 and were not seen as the ways cluster staff residential quarters can be provided to enhance quality education delivery in UBE schools in Rivers State. The grand mean of 2.86 of head teachers is above the grand mean of 2.85 of principals. This

revealed that head teachers have slightly higher opinions on the ways cluster staff residential quarters can be provided to enhance quality education delivery in UBE schools in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: In what ways can security be provided to enhance cluster staff residential quarters for quality education delivery in UBE schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean (\bar{X}) and Standard Deviation (Sd) on the Opinions of Principals and Head Teachers on Ways Security can be Provided to Enhance Cluster Staff Residential Quarters for Quality Education Delivery in UBE Schools In Rivers State

S/N	Ways Cluster Staff Residential Quarters' Security can be Provided Include:	Principals = 185			Head Teachers = 290		
		\bar{X}	Sd	Decision	\bar{X}	Sd	Decision
11.	Provision of holistic approach to security-based meaningful engagement for quality education delivery.	3.40	.87	Agreed	3.32	.54	Agreed
12.	Building security support alliances for quality education delivery.	2.64	.57	Agreed	3.13	.53	Agreed
13.	Increasing support on security priorities among organizations for quality education delivery.	2.80	.79	Agreed	2.54	.68	Agreed
14.	Identification checks of residents after 11 p.m. for quality education delivery.	3.06	.86	Agreed	2.57	.69	Agreed
15.	Implementation of disciplinary actions for violations of security regulations for quality education delivery.	2.78	.83	Agreed	2.55	.84	Agreed
16.	Mandatory gate lock changes when a key is reported missing for quality education delivery.	3.29	.78	Agreed	2.97	.34	Agreed
17.	Prohibition of loitering by non-residents in cluster quarters' public areas.	2.52	.92	Agreed	3.26	.53	Agreed
18.	Involvement of host communities for quality education delivery.	3.11	.78	Agreed	2.96	.49	Agreed
19.	Personally observing all building security regulations including using appropriate entrances for quality education delivery.	2.69	.88	Agreed	3.07	.50	Agreed
20.	Restrictions of visitors into cluster residential quarters until after confirming from the staff they are visiting.	2.98	.88	Agreed	3.05	.42	Agreed
Aggregate Mean /Sd		2.93			2.94		

Table 2 showed that items with serial numbers 11 to 20 have their various mean values above the criterion mean value of 2.50 and were agreed by both principals and head teachers as the ways security can be provided for cluster staff residential quarters to enhance quality education delivery in UBE schools in Rivers State. Head teachers have grand mean value of 2.94 slightly above that of principals of 2.93 on the ways security can be provided for cluster staff residential quarters to enhance quality education delivery in UBE schools in Rivers State. Hence, head teachers have slightly high opinions than the principals.

Table 3: z-test of Difference Between the Mean Scores of Principals and Head Teachers on the Ways Cluster Staff Residential Quarters can be provided for Quality Education Delivery in UBE Schools in Rivers State

Categories	N	\bar{X}	Sd	Df	z-cal	Probability value	Alpha level	Decision
Principals	175	2.85	0.64	463	.155	.877	0.05	Hypothesis not rejected
Head teachers	290	2.86	0.22					

P < 0.05

Table 3 showed that principals have mean and standard deviation scores of 2.85 and 0.64 while head teachers have mean and standard deviation scores of 2.86 and 0.22 respectively. With a degree of freedom of 463, the calculated z-test of 0.155 has a probability value of 0.877 which is higher than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected. By implication, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and head teachers on the ways cluster staff residential quarters can be provided to enhance quality education delivery in UBE schools in Rivers State.

Table 4: z-test of Difference Between the Mean Scores of Principals and Head Teachers on the Ways Security can be Provided for Cluster Staff Residential Quarters to Enhance Quality Education Delivery in UBE Schools in Rivers State

Categories	N	\bar{X}	Sd	Df	z-cal	Probability value	Alpha level	Decision
Principals	175	2.92	0.48	463	.360	.719	0.05	Hypothesis not rejected
Head teachers	290	2.94	0.32					

P < 0.05

Table 4 revealed that principals have mean and standard deviation scores of 2.92 and 0.48 while head teachers have mean and standard deviation scores of 2.94 and 0.32 respectively. With a degree of freedom of 463, the calculated z-test of .360 has a probability value of 0.719 which is greater than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected. By implication, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and head teachers on the ways cluster staff residential quarters' security can be provided to enhance quality education delivery in UBE schools in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

This study revealed that ways cluster staff residential quarters can be provided for quality education delivery in UBE schools in Rivers State include: ensuring that only teachers who are in need of quarters are given priority; ensuring that teachers do not sub-rent their apartment; provisions of single family bungalow for less crowded families; teachers' commitment to work cooperatively with other residents; teachers' willingness to contribute to cluster strategic response plan; semi detached bungalows should be provided for bigger families; teachers' understanding of responsibilities associated with cluster participation; conducting needs assessment analysis of teachers in the quarters; ensuring total elimination of duplication allocation and reporting any significant change in the human situation. This finding is in agreement with Oladimeji (2016), who conducted a study on staff housing scheme, and discovered that teachers who reside within the school premises have more job satisfaction than those who operate from the neighbourhood. The finding is also in line with Taiwo (2019); Emodi and Emeka (2018), who observed that provisions of staff quarters can mitigate the challenges of high cost house rent, problems of traffic congestion, poor waste disposal, shortage of water and inadequate power supply. Thus, provisions of quarters for staff not only ease the mobility of teachers to schools but also alleviate the financial burden on house rents.

This study also discovered that ways security can be provided for cluster staff residential quarters to enhance quality education delivery in UBE schools in Rivers State include: provision of holistic approach to security-based meaningful engagement; building security support alliances; increasing support on security priorities among organizations; identification checks for residents after 11 p.m.; implementation of disciplinary actions for violations of security regulations; mandatory gate lock changes when a key is reported missing; prohibition of loitering by non-residents in cluster quarters' public areas; involvement of host communities for quality education delivery; personally observing all building security regulations including using appropriate entrances and restrictions of visitors into cluster residential quarters until after confirming from the staff they are visiting. This finding is in line with Albany (2018); Tuemmler (2014); Iyi (2014), who suggested that security personnel who have the necessary expertise, resources, access and capacity to manage security-related activities in cluster residential quarters should be hired in organisations to the manage the job efficiently.

The finding is also in line with Whyte (2019); Nwideduh and Adieme (2017), who recommended in their various studies that school administrators should involve the host communities in security activities so as

to avoid robbery attacks and vandalising school facilities. The finding is also in agreement with Bradone (2021), who observed that it is very important that staff quarters provide occupants with comfortable, conducive, safe, healthy, decent and secured environments. Hence, School Management ought to be proactive in order to meet the security needs of staff by preventing and responding to issues on security. This way, the teaching staff will have job satisfaction, be more productive and deliver qualitative education.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore concluded that provisions of cluster staff residential quarters that are decent, comfortable, conducive, safe, healthy and well-secured with constant electricity and water supply enhance quality education delivery in UBE schools in Rivers State.

Recommendations

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

1. Government, public-private sectors, stakeholders, philanthropists, non-governmental organisations, among others should collaborate in providing cluster staff residential quarters in order to enhance quality education delivery in UBE schools.
2. The school authority should ensure that security personnel are well-equipped with security gadgets and document personal details of visitors in the school premises so as to curb the challenges of cluster staff residential quarters security for quality education delivery in UBE schools.

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