

**1999**

**Volume. 1**

# **Journal of Education and Training Technology (JETT)**

**ISSN 1595-2657**

A publication of

**African Society for Education and Training Technology**



## Learning Facilities as Indices for Quality Education in Akwa Ibom State.

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### ABSTRACT

The relationship between school facilities and the quality of education, whether at the primary, post-primary or tertiary level, is perhaps one of the most important educational concerns of our contemporary era. The National Policy on Education, while enumerating the various strategies government would take to implement the policy, stated among other things that "Educational and training facilities will be multiplied and made more accessible to afford the individual a far more diversified and flexible choice. Facilities are often regarded as a driving force and a genuine source of educational excellence of any level of education. It is therefore, the focus of this paper to survey the available facilities and the effect these facilities have on the quality of education that secondary school students receive in Akwa Ibom State.

### INTRODUCTION

The relationship between school facilities and the quality of education, whether at the primary, post-primary or tertiary level, is perhaps one of the most important educational concerns of our contemporary era. Recently, research students and reports, seminars, workshops and conferences attracting a huge number of educationists and policy statements of both the Federal and State Governments have tended to demonstrate the extent of the concern to understand more about the relationship.

The National Policy on Education, while enumerating the various strategies government would take to implement the policy states among others that "Educational and training facilities will be multiplied and made more accessible to afford the individual a far more diversified and flexible choice" (Federal

Republic of Nigeria, 1981, revised, page 8). Paragraph 15 section 5 of the same policy also adds that "Government will ensure that all schools are effectively properly equipped to promote sound and effective teaching and in particular that suitable textbooks and libraries are provided for schools". From the foregoing, it could be argued that facilities are often regarded as a driving force and a genuine source of educational excellence of any level of education.

Edem (1987) reported that teaching materials stimulate and sustain the interest of the learners, stabilize adequate interaction between the teachers and learners and encourage the students to gain more experience in the lesson taught.

It therefore, becomes a fact that there is a growing tendency for most writers and



policy-makers to regard school facilities as the most important variable in the teaching – learning process. But what is often found lacking is the consideration of actual conditions under which availability or non-availability of facilities contribute or fail to contribute to academic excellence in our secondary schools. This has therefore generated the need for a comprehensive study of the learning environment to find out how learning facilities can adequately determine quality education.

This is the central problem that has moved the researcher into conducting this piece of research work.

Undeniably, there has been incessant cry all over the country about the falling quality of education in our primary and post-primary institutions. Owing to this gradual falling quality students' performances have been relatively poor over the years due to:

1. Inability to make available classrooms, buildings, well-equipped laboratories, workshops, relevant textbooks and instructional materials.
2. Lack of guidance and counselling services in schools and its effect on students and schools coupled with increase unrest and moral decadence among students.
3. Shortage of or inadequate qualified teachers and irregular payment of their salaries and allowances.
4. The effect of political situation and attitudes of succeeding government towards education and curriculum implementation.

5. The explosion in students' population without a corresponding increases in infrastructural facilities human and material resources.
6. The dearth of locally written textbooks on learning facilities and high cost of the available ones followed by lack of encouragement on local authors and publishers to produce more textbooks on the subject.
7. Strike action by teaching staff.
8. Attitudes of teachers towards students.
9. Lack of proper planning and inadequate funding.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTION I**

What are the learning facilities in Business Studies which when used, enhance quality education?

#### **RESEARCH QUESTION II**

What are the effects of those facilities on the students?

#### **POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

The study was conducted in Uyo urban of Akwa Ibom State. To sample the opinion of the students, all members of the population were given equal chance by employing random sampling techniques. Consequently, to eliminate all possible bias, the exercise involved the use of simple random table. To enable the investigator obtain the needed information, the questionnaires were administered on two hundred (200) students and 5 Heads of Departments selected from the five secondary schools in Uyo Urban which offer Business Studies on their curricular.

**ANALYSIS:** The raw data so collected were used to analyse the research questions using frequency tables, percentages and mean.

**TABLE I**

**Availability and use of Learning Facilities in Business Studies.**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Learning Facilities</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	Calculators	8	26.67
2	Stapling machine	7	23.30
3	Type-writers	5	16.67
4	Punch-card machines	5	16.67
5	Tape Recorders	2	16.67
6	Stop watch	3	10.00
7	Franking machine	0	0
8	Photostatting	0	0
9	Dictating	0	0
10	Recording	0	0
11	Adding machine	0	0
12	Shreding machine	0	0
13	Computer	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table II below presents the data for research question 2 and mean scores**



**Table II**  
**Learning Facilities**

S/N	Items	A F	(4) FX	SF	SA(3) FX	D(2) F	FX	SD(1) F		Mean Rating
1		85	340	48	144	30	60	37	601	2.91
2	1	0	360	50	150	30	60	30	600	3.00
3	2	85	340	50	150	0	60	35	585	2.92
4	4	80	320	50	150	30	60	40	570	2.85
5	5	75	300	40	120	40	80	40	530	2.75
6	6	74	296	40	120	40	80	40	516	2.58

**Findings:**

It was discovered that most schools were affected by problem of none availability of learning facilities. This study also showed that most schools were affected by the problem of lack of space for the installation of the facilities, such as computer, photostating machine etc. The data on table II above confirm this. From the table, the mean rating clearly indicate the effect of these facilities on the students.

**Discussion:**

**Learning Facilities that enhance quality education**

This research work has revealed that most of the learning facilities are not available in some schools. The data on table I confirmed that. From the table, it could be seen that the majority of the respondents endorsed the availability and the usage of items numbers 1 to 6 during their lessons

with high frequency and percentage. The study also showed that some of the available facilities were not functional due to breakdowns and unfortunately there had been no funds to effect repairs. Other things that caused mal-function of some of these facilities according to research are lack of electricity and adequate maintenance of the facilities. The study has also revealed that items 7 to 13 are not available in any of the sampled schools.

**The Effect of these facilities on the Students**

The study has revealed that almost all the schools are affected by the problems of inadequate or total lack of learning facilities, particularly in the area of Business Studies. This lack of learning facilities has constituted greatly to high rate of failures in Junior Secondary School Certificate and Senior Secondary School Certificate examinations. It



was also discovered that this mass failure is not unconnected with lack of interest on the part of students due to lack of learning facilities.

The research has revealed that wherever there were learning facilities, they will be inadequate in that the students' population will outnumber the facilities available. This high population in a class is not in line with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNESCO recommendation – that a class size should be 25 to 30 students.

Generally, these lapses have contributed greatly to students' dropouts, failure in examinations, turning out of half-baked graduates and general lack of interest in pursuit of Business Studies.

In summarising the research findings, it is pertinent to bear in mind the set purpose (objective) and problem of the study which have been learning facilities as indices for quality education in Uyo Urban of Akwa Ibom State. Arising from the problem defined, the purpose of the study was to determine through the available literature and data analysis the relationship existing between school facilities and the quality of education, and lastly to suggest ways of effectively using such facilities to promote the course of instruction in our Secondary Schools.

Based on this background, the various literature reviewed on the topic had indicated that school facilities like textbooks, libraries, chairs, tables and buildings etc when provided in sufficient quantity and

quality are capable of promoting students' performances. The literature called for a consideration of interaction between teaching or instructional facilities and other educational variables like teacher training and welfare, parental motivation, students' seriousness, in-service education, teacher experience etc in thinking about ways of making school facilities actively enhance the course of instruction.

From the analysis of data collected, the following findings were also made:

1. The provision of instructional materials facilitates better learning, teaching and understanding among school students.
2. Secondary School Students require teacher's guidance /assistance to effectively understand their studies or make effective use of the library.
3. Effective learning itself is guaranteed in schools where teachers master the proper use of instructional facilities and equipment provided.
4. Teacher-training courses on the proper utilisation of school facilities are not constantly provided by government due to shortage of funds.
5. Teaching-aids and physical facilities are adequate in schools with active support by the Parents-Teachers Association (PTA).
6. Parental support, the amount of home-work done by



students and the physical conditions of home study among others are necessity in considering students' performance and achievement in our Secondary Schools.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

From the analysis of data, major findings throughout the study have pointed to the fundamental belief that school facilities are crucial in the process of determining the quality of an educational system. There are abundant evidence from the findings that for such facilities to adequately serve as instruments for promoting students' performances, teacher training or expertise should be seriously considered as a very important factor. Among others such training should enable teachers acquire the necessary skills in the proper handling and utilisation of the learning materials. In addition, it has been an established fact that inadequate provisions of school facilities do not promote a conducive atmosphere for learning and teaching.

Although it is difficult to prescribe a catalogue aimed at making school facilities fundamental and relevant to the course of instruction, the researcher postulates the following recommendations.

1. Learners at secondary school level should be sufficiently equipped by the government with learning facilities to encourage them at independent group learning activities. Also in this era of

information explosion and dynamic instructional strategies, the need for affordable education resource centres can never be over-emphasized.

2. The government should constantly embark upon teacher education. This would provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their specialized role. In addition, such training programmes should take cognizance of innovations and techniques in various subjects – areas and the proper application of instructional materials.

3. Besides, both Parents/Teachers Association and the committees should be actively involved in the provision of school facilities. The Community, the Old Students Association, Philanthropic individuals, organisations and social clubs should contribute towards the provision of teaching materials.

4. In this austere and inflation period, there should be self-help approach to school projects. According to Fagbemi (1986) a school putting up a library block can mobilise students to clean the site (unlike the school farm), fetch water for workers, while reserving the technical aspects of the projects for paid workers just to reduce cost.

5. The government should come to the aid of schools that lack teaching aids and materials predominantly in the rural areas and ensure that teachers make good use of them through regular inspection by the inspectorate division of the Ministry of Education, Youth Development.
6. Lastly, in order to enable teachers' stay alive to this great task of nurturing children entrusted into their care, efforts should be geared towards providing them with appropriate incentives thereby discussing the old belief that teachers' reward is in heaven. This could be by regular and meaningful payment of salaries, leaves allowance.

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