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## **Availability of Supportive Facilities for Effective Teaching**

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# Availability of Supportive Facilities for Effective Teaching

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## **Abstract**

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Work environment of teachers has been identified by many researchers as one of the key propensity for quality teaching. Teaching will be effective when all necessary accoutrements are available and put into practical utilisation. Unlike the private schools, there has been a continues sentiments that, most government Junior High schools in Ghana do not perform satisfactorily during the Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E) due to the lack of conducive working environment. As majority of Ghanaian pupils' school in this sector of education, hence this argument is wealthy of investigation. Therefore the purpose of this study is to identify the availability and the adequacy of certain necessary school facilities within the environment of Junior High Schools in the New Juaben Municipality, Eastern Region of Ghana. Questionnaire was used to collect data from two hundred (200) teachers who were selected from twenty (20) Junior High Schools in the New Juaben Municipality. The results reveal that facilities like furniture for pupil, urinal and toilet facilities and classroom blocks, were available but not adequate. However, computer laboratories, library books, staff common room and teachers' accommodation were unavailable. Practical Implications of these results are been discussed.

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**Keywords:** work environment, teaching, Junior High Schools, teachers

# Disponibilidad de Recursos de Apoyo para una Enseñanza Efectiva

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## Resumen

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El ambiente de trabajo del profesorado ha sido identificado por muchos investigadores como uno de los factores clave de la calidad de la enseñanza. La enseñanza será efectiva cuando todos los accesorios necesarios estén disponibles para poner en práctica su uso. A diferencia de las escuelas privadas, existe la percepción continuada que la mayoría del alumnado de los Institutos de Secundaria públicos en Ghana no alcanzan satisfactoriamente El Certificado de Examen de Educación Básica (B.E.C.E) debido a la falta de entornos facilitadores de trabajo. Este es un buen propósito de estudio debido a que, en Ghana, la mayoría del alumnado se encuentra en escuelas públicas. En esta línea, el propósito de este estudio es identificar la disponibilidad y adecuación de ciertas infraestructuras escolares necesarias en el contexto de los Institutos de Secundaria del municipio de New Juaben, en la zona Este de Ghana. Para ello, se pasaron cuestionarios que fueron usados para recoger los datos de doscientos profesores seleccionados entre dichos Institutos. Los resultados revelan como el mobiliario por alumno/a, retrete o clases que estaban disponibles no eran adecuados. Tampoco existía disponibilidad de laboratorios de ordenadores, bibliotecas o salas del profesorado. Finalmente, se presentarán también las implicaciones prácticas que conllevan estos resultados.

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**Palabras claves:** entorno de trabajo, enseñanza, institutos de educación secundaria, profesorado

Quality education is paramount to National Development. In view of this, the international agencies and Governments including the Government of Ghana agreed that, in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and Education (MDG) over the next decade, there is a need to develop strategies that will remove the barriers to attain quality education (UNESCO, 2003 as cited in Hayford, 2007). In Ghana, quality education is not an issue for Government alone, but parents are also committed to the MDG 2 educational goals by investing heavily into the education of their children. For instance, it is worth noting that, most junior and senior high schools in Ghana have Parents Teacher Association (PTA) where parents make contributions to help build and maintain schools of their children. On the part of Government, 31% of the national budget is spent on education. Out of this huge budget for the Educational Sector, about 90% goes into the remuneration of teachers and other supportive staff (Sedem, 2011).

Several interventions such as the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE), Capitation Grant, School Feeding Programme, free exercise books and school uniforms have been implemented to ensure quality education. However, there have been differential educational achievements of students in Ghana, with a good number of them performing abysmally in all national assessments. The most recent is the case of poor performance in the 2011 BECE results, where out of the 375,280 students who sat for the 2011 examination, only 176,128 passed their examinations with the fate of 199,152 students now doomed to a grim future of uncertainties (Asare, 2012). It is not only unacceptable, but also unjustifiable for such heavy investment made by parents and government to yield poor results. Although the situation is often blamed on several stakeholders in education, the teachers' performance is placed at the centre of the blame game. On the 28 September 2011, the Ghana News Agency (GNA) reported the Deputy Upper East Regional Minister, Mrs. Lucy Awuni to had questioned the performance of teachers in the region as having contributed immensely to the poor performance of students in the 2011 Basic Education

Certificate Examination (BECE) (GNA, 2011). Also in the same region, The District Chief Executive (DCE) for the East Gonja District, Alhassan Mumuni descended heavily on teachers in the district, especially professional teachers, for unjustifiably contributing to the poor performance of student in the district.

Although Agyeman (1993) emphasizes academic and professional qualification of teachers as key factors to successful teaching performance, he further stated that ‘a teacher who is academically and professionally qualified, but work under unfavourable conditions of service would be less dedicated to his work which would amount to less productivity than a teacher who is unqualified but work under favourable conditions of service’ (cited in Suleman et al., 2012). This means that hiring qualified teachers alone does not warrant quality teaching but providing conducive environment in addition is the key.

### **Theoretical framework**

#### *Conducive/Favourable Work Environment*

Work environment is the totality of conditions under which a person or a group of people work or perform their duties (Akporehe, 2011), In her research paper entitled ‘The Impact of Environment on Productivity in Secondary Schools’, Akporehe asserted that, work environment can be in the form of physical environment, human environment and relationship with colleagues, administrators, interaction within the system and the general quality of the work climate. Physical work environment, she said include school building, staff offices, staff residential accommodation, laboratories, libraries, workshops, places of convenience for staff and pupil recreational facilities, canteens for students and many others. According to Akporehe (2011), the human environment has to do with the relationship with colleagues, administrators or school as well as staff of the directorates at district, regional and national levels. How supervisors interact with heads and teachers of schools, the relationship and interaction of community level stakeholders such as the Parent and Teachers Association (PTA), the School Management Committee (SME), Traditional and Political leaders also come into play to form the human environment in which the teacher works. According to Ukeje (1990), as referenced in Akporehe

(2011), organizational climate is related to job satisfaction in terms of interpersonal relationship, group cohesiveness and task involvement teachers' condition of service – remuneration, promotion, professional development policies for teachers and general availability of tools needed to perform their jobs. Drawing inference from the definitions of work environment by Akpohere (2011) and Ukeje (1990), it is evidenced that the less presence of one or more of the forms of work environment is an indication of poor work environment.

#### *The concept of good teaching environment*

To address the falling quality of the present day education, it is wholesome to agreed that, prominence should be given to the elements of the school's work environment (Adesina, 1983 cited in Ajayi et al., 2011). This, he said would create an attractive intellectual atmosphere which would foster positive attitude towards teaching and learning. Adaralegbe (1983) and Akuegwu (2005) ascertained that, without a good socio-psychological, physical and intellectual environment, teachers and students cannot perform well in their academic activities; that is, if the work environment is poor or unconducive it may have a negative effect on the academic performance of the students (cited in Ajayi et al., 2011).

Adesina (1995) asserted that, "quality work life affects human activities in all its visceral beyond mere basic needs". A school of scholars who adopted the resource based approach to the study of organisational structure believed that, the quantum of resources in a given organization is a major factor in explaining quality of employees work life (Emerson, 1962; Preffer, 1972a, 1972b; Aiken and Hage, 1968; Rus, 1978 cited in Ajayi et al., 2011). By their assertions Emerson, Preffer, Aiken and Hage and Rus meant that, the resources needed by teachers must not only be available but also should be sufficient and in good working condition for them to attain job satisfaction. According to Akporehe (2011), judging from poor work environment of the Nigerian school teachers, all the objectives set in the National Educational Policy of Nigeria are hardly achievable. Akporehe further asserted that, the presence of the physical environment which includes school building, staff offices, laboratories, libraries, place of conveniences for staff and pupil's, recreational facilities and others may

have a positive influence on teacher's attitude towards their jobs. Thus in a situation where these facilities are in poor state or not available, the teachers' morale is low and their level of commitment is very minimal

According to Akporehe (2011) lack of adequate motivation has negative effects on staff performance. Teachers will work hard and show high level of commitment when they are adequately motivated. Studies by Lockheed et al. (1991) also indicated that lack of motivation and professional commitment produce poor attendance and unprofessional attitudes towards students which in turn affect the performance of students academically (cited in Okyerefo M.P.K et al. 2011). Motivation according to Odor (1995), is the force or condition propels an individual to work towards the progress of the organization (Nakpodia, 2011). Human beings generally require some sort of internal and external drives such as incentives, encouragement and satisfaction of basic needs to get the best from them towards the accomplishment of group goals and objectives. Nwachukwu (1992) as cited in Akporehe (2011) also defines motivation as 'an energizing force that produces or compels and maintains behaviour.' A good work environment therefore is that kind of environment where staff is highly motivated for hard job and commitment to bring about good job performance. From their definitions, Odor and Nwachukwu meant to say that, a conducive work environment serve as a source of motivation for teachers, compelling them to give off their best on their jobs. The findings of a study conducted by Agyeman (1993) appear to be buttressing the assertions of Odor and Nwachukwu. Agyeman state that 'regardless of the academic and professional qualification of teachers and their level of commitment, if the necessary resources are not provided by stakeholders, the teaching staff cannot perform, no matter how much they are induced. Opatolu (1995) also found experience, conducive work environment, and possession of teaching qualification, disposition, and interest in the job, dedication and commitment, among others, to be most important in academic staff job performance (cited in Ajayi et al., 2011). Churchill (1965) also found a positive relationship between the location of a school and the student and teacher performance (cited in Etsey, 2005). Verdugo et al. (1997) emphasizes that 'if quality schooling is the goal, the focus should be on developing an organizational climate that permits teachers to perform their duties in a professional and

autonomous manner (cited in Mhozya, 2007).

Although several literatures point to the fact that favourable work environment is a requirement for teachers' performance, it is important not to forget about the role of the professional competence of teachers who desire such favourable work environment. Anderson and Dyke (1972) asserted that 'the cornerstone of good education in any school is its faculty (teachers); fine buildings and equipment, special services and all other factors which help to provide favourable environment. For learning mean little, if the learning experiences are directed by incompetent teachers' (cited in Akporehe, 2011). Neagley and Evans (1970) and Etsey, Amedahe and Edjah (2004) also see supervision as a key environmental factor in the workplace which affects the performance of teachers. They all view effective supervision of teachers as a major factor contributing to teachers' performance (cited in Suleman et al., 2012). Powerful synergic effect of professionally competent teachers, favourable work environment and effective supervision of teachers' work and several other factors come into play in ensuring performance of teachers.

#### *Factors that influence teaching*

Review of several literatures in the preceding sections have established a positive link between conducive work environment and teachers' performance which eventually translate to become students' performance. According to a report by the Operations Evaluation Department (OED) of the World Bank (2004) on 'Books, Buildings and Learning Outcomes', school quality can be measured by four different inputs i.e., material inputs such as chalk and textbooks; physical inputs such as classrooms and blackboards; teachers and school management were identified as four key factors in the school environment which facilitate educational outcome through teachers' performance. Also, Harbison and Hanushek (1992) were reported in The World Bank's OED (2004) report to have categorised educational inputs into:

- i. "Hardware" such as school buildings, classrooms and furniture, sanitation, etc.
- ii. "Software" such as curriculum, pedagogy, textbooks, writing materials, teaching and learning materials, etc.



- iii. Teachers.
- iv. Management and institutional structure and
- v. Context and background variables such as student academicability, family and community background, etc.

### *Physical (Hardware) Input*

The various reports referenced in this write up have shown the importance of school buildings and other infrastructural facilities to teachers' performance. A comprehensive case study conducted by White (2004) as referenced in OED of the World Bank (2004) report offers specific evidence that, a minimum basic quality of school facilities matters significantly towards the achievement of higher teachers' performance. For instance, in certain parts of Ghana, schools often close due to roof leakage (White, 2004). Similarly, it was reported that in 1988 less than half of schools could use all their classrooms during rainfall (OED of The World Bank, 2004). According to Berry (2002), schools manifest common traits including availability of sanitary facilities such as water, toilets, urinals etc; safety of school buildings such as walls without cracks; adequate indoor and outdoor recreational grounds, proper lighting system in classrooms and libraries etc. Harbison and Hanushek (1992) made mention of furniture such as teachers' chair and table, student's desks, classroom cupboards as 'hardware inputs which teachers cannot do without. Cash (1993) as referenced in Brendle-Corum (2010) mentioned furniture and other hardware inputs as comfort factors in school environment that influence student's performance.

A study conducted by Churchill (1965) found a positive relationship between the location of a school, the students and teachers performance. Earthman and Lemasters (1998) posit that, students' perform well in schools that have less external noise. Hence excessive external noise causes stress in students which leads to class dissatisfaction and truancy (cited in Schneider, 2002). This means that, teachers would have to strain their voices in order to make whatever they are saying audible to students. These problems are more acute for children who may have hearing impediments (Nelson and Soli 2000 cited in Schneider, 2002). A study conducted by Fisher (2000) also supports the assertion that, higher noise level around classrooms causes stress to students.

### *Class size*

Podmore (1998) as referenced in Cakmak (2009) stated that, there is a relationship between class size and children's achievement, children's motivation, teacher satisfaction, teacher stress, and the organization. Class size is an important factor in a school design, as it drives facility-related issues that are part and parcel of the school building plan, construction, cost, maintenance, and operational plan (Schneider, 2004). According to Cakmak (2009), classes might be small or large in size but in both cases, it is expected that teachers should teach effectively by having students' interests and learning experience in mind. The definition of a "small" or a "large" classroom might differ in contexts (Cakmak, 2009). Hargreaves, Galton, and Pell (1998) as referenced in Cakmak (2009), for instance indicated that, there is little agreement about the optimal size of a class. According to Croll and Hastings (1996), as reference in Cakmak (2009), class size effects cannot be just a matter of the number of children in a class. The number of children must have an effect on other classroom processes and activities which has an effect on learning. Thus a reduced number of teacher- student ratio would promote quality teaching. The reflective journals, 81 pieces in total by 9 URs, were analysed using both inductive and deductive methods.

## **Methodology**

### *The respondents*

The respondents for this study were teachers from the Government Junior High Schools in the New Juaben Municipality, Eastern Region of Ghana. The researcher's decision to focus on Junior High Schools is justified by the fact that, this level is the first level in Ghana's educational system where standard form of assessment of students' performance is made at the end of the period of study. It is the point where progression to the next level is based on a well-structured, standard and internationally recognized examination. It is also the point where the performance of students can be easily ascertained. There are seventy-three (73) Junior High schools in the municipality, which have about 500 teachers. Simple random sampling technique was used to choose two hundred (250) respondents (teachers) from 40 selected

Junior High Schools in the New Juaben Municipality.

### **Data analysis and results**

Two hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed to the respondents and only two hundred were returned within two weeks, which represents 80% of the total response rate. Of the 200 respondents, 56 percent of them were males. Majority of the respondents were in the 20 to 30 years old range. Regarding academic qualification, 40.5 percent were Diploma holders, 12 percent were Certificate “A” holders, 35 percent were Bachelor degree holders, 2.5 percent were Masters degree holders and the remaining 10 percent hold other qualifications such as “Peoples teacher”. Finally, on the length of service, about 25 percent have served 1-2 years, 30 percent 2-3 years, 30 percent 4-6 years and 15 percent 7 years and above. It is important to note that, data was collected from 200 teachers from 40 Junior High Schools in the New Juaben Municipal Assemble.

### *Results*

A descriptive technique was used for testing of the variables. Table1 shows that, 42.5% of the respondents are in schools that have available and adequate classroom blocks. Forty-nine (49.0%) of the respondents are in schools that have available classroom blocks inadequate to meet up the number of students. Whiles schools representing 8.5% have their classroom blocks in a deplorable state. Classroom block is of great essence when effective teaching and learning can be achieved. Within the municipality, 17 schools has adequate classrooms; 20 schools had inadequate classroom block; and 3 schools have this facility but in a poor state. This leads to schools resorting to the shift system whiles others in their quest manage this issues end up having large classes. Due to this teachers wouldn’t be able to give off their best.3 schools also have this facility available but in a poor state.

Table 1  
*Availability of Classroom Blocks*

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Available	85	42.5	42.5
Available but inadequate	98	49.0	91.5
Available but in poor state	17	8.5	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

From table 2, 4.0% of the respondents are in the schools that have well furnished staff common room. Forty two (42.0%) of the respondents are in schools that have staff common rooms but inadequate to meet the number of teachers employed in the schools. Schools representing 18.5% have this facility available but cannot be used. Whiles schools representing 35.5% don't have this facility at all. From the above table, it can be deduced that more teachers carried out their activities (i.e., preparing notes, marking papers, etc) in non-teaching places. This led to some teachers resorting to sitting under tree's, outside the classrooms.

Table 2  
*Furnished staff common room*

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Available	8	4.0	4.0
Available but inadequate	84	42.0	46.0
Available but in poor state	37	18.5	64.5
Not Available	71	35.5	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The distribution in the table below indicates that 26 schools representing 13.0% have adequate library. Schools representing 14.0% have library but in deplorable state whiles schools representing 73.0% don't have library stocked with books. Within the municipality majority of the schools don't have libraries. This deficiency in the teaching environment affects the learning and teaching practices.

Table 3  
*Library stock with books*

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Available	26	13.0	13.0
Available but inadequate	28	14.0	27.0
Available but in poor state	146	73.0	100
<b>Total</b>	200	100	100

From Table 4, 23.0% of the respondents are in schools that have urinal and toilet facilities at their disposal. Thirty eight percent (38.5%) of the respondents are in schools that have urinal and toilet but not enough to meet up the number of teachers and pupils found in the school. Twenty three percent (23.5%) of the respondents have these facilities but in a deplorable state. Whiles the remaining 15.0% don't have these facilities at all.

Table 4  
*Urinal and Toilet for students and teachers*

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Available	46	13.0	13.0
Available but inadequate	77	38.5	61.5
Available but in poor state	47	23.5	85.0
Not Available	30	15.0	100
<b>Total</b>	200	100	100

From table 5, 3.0% of the respondents teach in schools that have computer laboratories stocked with computers and accessories. Also 40.5% of the respondents are in schools that have computer laboratories stocked with computers but not enough to meet the students needs. Four percent of the respondents are in schools that 4.0% have computers enough to meet the number of students for such lessons but the computers are in deplorable state. Whiles the remaining 52.5% of the respondents teach in schools that does not have computer laboratory.

Table 5  
*Computer laboratory*

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Available	6	3.0	3.0
Available but inadequate	81	40.5	43.5
Available but in poor state	8	4.0	47.5
Not Available	105	52.5	100
<b>Total</b>	200	100	100

### **Discussion, recommendation and conclusion**

The results of the analysis show that, majority of the respondents teaches in schools that has no classroom blocks or in deplorable state. Also the analysis of Table 2 indicates that, 91.5% of the respondents teach in schools that have no staff common rooms or the common rooms have inadequate space to occupy all the teaching staff. As 35.5% teaches in schools that has no staff common rooms at all. This means that most teachers in these schools may result in having their lessons under trees and pavement on the schools compound. Oshagbemi (1999) pointed out that, physical conditions and facilities are critical elements of job satisfaction (cited in Leung, Chan & Wang, 2006). Teachers use the staff common rooms when preparing teaching materials, assessing homework, executing administrative duties, and making decisions (Darling-Hammond, 2000, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001, 2002 cited in Leung, Chan & Wang, 2006). This findings gives an indication that, only few schools are in the position to meet the needs of their students in terms staff common room. On the other hand, there is a perception that when adequate resources are available to meet work demands, manageability of the job is increased (Nelson & Simmons, 2003). This presupposes that most teachers in the municipality would find it very difficult to manage their jobs which would impede successful teaching performance. Again, as analyzed and presented in table 3, 77% of the respondents teaches in schools that has no urinal and toilets and if they have its in deplorable state. The analysis also shows that, only 13% of the respondents teaches in a schools that has urinal and toilet. As the 77% does not have or have

but its in a deplorable shape. This means that most schools in the municipalities does have a decent and a clean sanitary environment.

Moreover, Table 4 indicates that majority of the respondents' i.e., 52.5% teach in schools that has no computer laboratory as the remaining 48% of the respondents work in schools that have computer laboratory but either in poor state or inadequate.

Analysis in Table 5 shows that, most schools in the municipality have library but either in poor state or the books in the shelves are inadequate.

The findings of this study shows that facilities like furniture for pupil, urinal and toilet facilities and classroom blocks were available but not adequate. However, computer laboratories, library books, staff common room and teachers' accommodation were unavailable and if available its mostly in a deplorable state.

The study recommends that, the Educational Ministry should have a policy in place to ensure the provision of certain amenities like physical staff common rooms, computer laboratories, adequate classroom blocks library and others are in place before license is given. Also, since the work environment is significantly related to job performance, government as well as school administrators should encourage the support of parents, philanthropists and corporate institutions to provide physical input (i.e. physical structures), material input (i.e. teaching and learning material) and other employee benefits for teachers to attain maximum job satisfaction. Moreover, the Capitation grant and other educational fund should be shared equitably for the benefit of all schools in the country.

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