

## **PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL INSECURITY ON TEACHER'S PRODUCTIVITY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, EBONYI STATE**

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### **Abstract**

The study investigated the perceived influence of school environmental insecurity on teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Ebonyi L.G.A., Ebonyi state. The design of the study was a descriptive survey research design. A total of 120 teachers drawn from public secondary schools, Ebonyi L.G.A. using simple random sampling technique were used as the sample size. Two research questions guided the study. 31 item structured questionnaire' titled 'Perceived Influence of School Environmental Insecurity on Teacher Productivity Questionnaire' (PISEITPQ), The instrument was validation by three experts and reliability of internal consistency was tested through trial of the instrument on 20 students Government teachers in Ezza North L.G.A of Ebonyi. A reliability index of 0.70 was realized which shows that the instrument was reliable. The data generated were analysed using mean and standard deviation. The results of the study revealed that there are perceived environmental insecurities that affect teachers' productivity Ebonyi L.G.A such as physical hazards, kidnapping of school teachers and children for ransom, psychological threats, lack of school fencing and protection for teachers and students among others. From the findings, the study recommended amongst others that efforts be made by owners of schools as well as stakeholders in education in Ebonyi L.G.A. and the state at large to ensure that teachers are adequately motivated and school environments fenced and protected to ward off intruders from school premises so that teachers can be very productive in their teachings.

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**Keywords:** School environment, insecurity, teachers' productivity

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### **Introduction**

Globally, security has remained a subject of great concern. No nation or society can boast of being completely free from the problems ensued by insecurity. In the last two decades alone, countries like Israel, North Korea, Russia, USA, South Korea, and recently Ukraine and Taiwan have experienced different forms of transnational violence, terrorism and insecurity (Isaac, 2022). Terrorism, kidnapping, insurgency, and socio ethno-religious conflicts have emerged in countries such as Nigeria, Kenya, Libya, and Sudan (Joshua, 2018). Kidnapping, ritual killings, suicide bombings and several other acts of criminality have risen and are fast spreading across Nigeria, and Ebonyi state is not an exception. Security is synonymous with feelings of being safe, freedom from dangerous attacks and protection from physical harm (Isaac, 2022). Security of teachers implies presence of factors in the school environments that enhance peace and happiness so as to spur the teachers to effectively function in their duty posts.

The concept of insecurity connotes the state of being insecure. According to Onifode, Imhonopl and Uorim (2013) security is the dynamic condition which involves the relative ability of a state to counter threats to its core values and interest and their primary beneficiaries are the citizens. Insecurity is concerned with the feelings of uncertainty, dangers or threats to life (Oluyomi & Grace, 2016). Hassan (2014) defined insecurity as a negative feeling involving fear, anxiety, uncertainty and injustice. It is obvious that many teachers and

students alike are caught up in conflicts that results to insecurity both to lives and the school properties. Worrisome enough is when an individual does not have control over a situation but has to rely on the cooperation of others that cannot be guaranteed, the result may be frustration and that is insecurity. Therefore, school environmental insecurity is a threat to learning and the prevailing peace within and around the schools which often has ripple effects on effective teaching and learning and other activities of such schools (Akintunde & Selzing-Musa, 2016). As insecurity is heightening, the understanding of its manifestations and consequences especially in the education sector, and in secondary schools and its environment, with particular emphasis in Ebonyi L.G.A. is also evolving (Isaac, 2022). Hence, this study investigated the perceived influence of school environmental insecurity on teacher's productivity in secondary schools, Ebonyi State. The teacher's ability to efficiently and effectively discharge her responsibilities for the actualization of school goals and objectives are subject to the conduciveness of the environment in which she operates (Obiechina, Abraham & Nwogu, 2018). In other words, a secure environment is critical to teachers' performance in classroom. School and environment cannot be divorced. Schools are established or located in an environment. An environment is the natural surroundings of an organism, which can be land, air or water (Asogwa, 2018). Monkhouse in Ofomata (2004) saw environment as the whole sum of the surrounding external conditions within which an organism, a community or an object exists. Therefore, good environment in this study is a place where teachers feel secure, and become productive in teaching.

According to Obi, Johnson and Lawani (2014), school environment connotes all human and material resources available in the school, in which a child can see, hear, touch, smell, taste, feel and respond to. The school environment is also referred to the working conditions of teacher's and their environment as it affects productivity and performance. Miller and Cunnighan (2011) maintained that the issue of school environment is multi-dimensional, as it possesses the physical, social, and academic dimensions. They listed the physical dimension to include the appearance of school building and classrooms, libraries, laboratories, hostels, sporting games and recreational facilities. School as an organization has certain aims and objectives which were set to be achieved by National Policy on Education. In order to achieve these aims and objectives, the school environmental security is very important. It makes sense to state that the lofty vision of education as enunciated in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria would be realized in a serene and conducive school environment void of any kind of security challenge. According to Lehr (2014), the noble goals of education can never be achieved in a vacuum. They would be achieved in a conducive and peaceful school environment. It therefore confirms that secure school environment encourages peaceful co-existence, positive school climate, cordial interactions among teachers and teachers, teachers and principals, students and students, and teachers and students for the overall benefit of the school (Ojukwu, 2017).

An insecure school environment, include the dilapidated conditions and teachers' negative attitude to condone and accept the emotional needs of students, which will lead to undue influences and clashes of a local community interfering with school business (Ojukwu & Nwanma, 2015). They reported that in a school environment characterized by insecurity, lateness is the norm in school and students are allowed to freely use handsets and phones. The high level of environmental insecurity in Nigeria has become a social problem, and a hydra-headed muster that cannot be over-emphasized because of its far-reaching implications and direct consequences on education, the economy and society in general (Agazuma & Mochi, 2021). The above described school environment may most likely affect teachers'

productivity. Most worrisome according to Agazuma & Mochi, is the emerging forms of complex and multifaceted array of security challenges such as terrorism, banditry, herders /farmers clashes and even a well organized transnational crimes among others in contemporary Nigeria which have taken a disturbing dimension to the extent that it has almost crippled various productive sectors, especially the education sector.

Productivity is concerned with proper deployment and utilization of organizational resources (labour, material, finance, technology, time, among others) to attain pre-determined set objectives. According to Nwachukwu (2016), teacher productivity is the output resulting from a teaching resources input at a given time. A vital means of ascertaining teachers' productivity is from students' performance in internal and external examinations. These could be determined through the analysis of their final year results which are based on West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO). These analyses will unveil the extent to which every teacher has put in his/her best in performing their school works. Unfortunately, Salith, Famade and Oluwadare (2012) made an observation that there is a general outcry concerning the quality of education especially at the low level of education in which secondary schools are involved. It therefore goes without argument that measurement of teachers' productivity is a laudable idea for teachers to work hard for optimal productivity (Obiechina, Abraham & Nwogu, 2018). It is a fact that the success of any school is based majorly on the results of quality of its teaching staff. It has been noted that no matter the extent of efficiency and effectiveness in any administration, the school may not succeed in getting the cooperation of devoted and highly experienced teachers without having an atmosphere of peace, unity and security (Ayodele, 2012 ; Conmeyras, 2013).

Environment plays major role in the life of every individual, whether a teacher or students. Adesina (2011) examined the relationship between teachers' productivity and school environmental security, and found that teachers' satisfaction was greater in well conducive and secured school environment than unsecured one. Flower and Welberg (2015) found in one of their studies that school environmental securities in most secondary schools were poor and learning environment is not encouraged. Ananga (2012) observed that teaching and learning in secondary schools were mostly affected by poor school environmental security, and this creates challenges to teachers' productivity in the class. These challenges according to Nwachukwu (2016) were as a result of high security challenges which lead to sub-standard education, in adequate resources for teaching, and students' poor academic performances.

The need for school environmental security is inevitable. Improving teacher productivity generally requires adequate environmental security (Glew, 2015). Also a sense of competency will often emerge in an environment that is fair and consistent in terms of environmental security. In sharing the view Abraham Maslow, Iyenger (2007) stated that a teacher perceives the world as a life threatening jungle, feels unsafe, unhappy, rejected, hostile, and pessimistic, shows a sign of tension, conflict and guilt, and tends to be neurotic and generally egocentric. It therefore seems that when a teacher teaches in an environment that is characterized by insecurity, they tend to be unproductive as students suffer academically, socially, mentally and emotionally. A teacher is an important figure in teaching and learning process. The teacher according to Nwosu (2011) is the principle executive in the educational enterprise and the producer of all other professionals. For teacher to be productive in teaching involves a lot of activities, which must happen in a serene, conducive and secured environment. In the context of this study, a teacher is one who helps the student

to learn as a means of being productive, especially in an environment that is devoid of crises and insecurity.

In Ebonyi State, it is perceived that the state of security has remained a mirage as insecurity which has resulted to wanton destruction of lives and properties have affected every sector of the economy in the state, secondary schools inclusive Okolo & Maduka (2024). Recently seen is the IPOB sit at home enforcers which lead to closure of schools in Ebonyi state for several weeks. There have also been several clashes between some communities, kidnappings, banditry, physical and psychological threats on teachers and most importantly no security personnel to monitor and guide schools against hoodlums and invaders (Chibuike, Chidozie, Groupson, Onyejebu, & Ugwu, 2021). All these had significant effects on school environment securities in Ebonyi state. More worrisome is Fulani-herdsmen invasion in some rural communities of Ebonyi L.G.A. that has inadvertently made school environments within such communities very insecure. The above factors have adverse effect on the external results of schools in Ebonyi state as shown by 2017, 2018, and 2019 (West African Examination Council Report, 2022). The need to carry out this study therefore arose from the occurrence and reoccurrence of strange situations in Ebonyi L.G.A. that has fervently resulted in the school environments being very insecure and directly affecting teacher productivity.

### **Statement of the problem**

The high level of environmental insecurity in Nigeria has become a social problem, and a hydra-headed monster that cannot be over-emphasized because of its far-reaching implications and direct consequences on education, particularly in Ebonyi L.G.A, Ebonyi state. Most worrisome is the emerging forms of security challenges across the country, which has taken a disturbing dimension to the extent that it has almost crippled education sectors. These emerging security challenges are evident on the media and include the following; incessant cases of armed robbery, kidnapping, bombings, abductions, rape, cultic activities and a high rise in ethnic and communal clashes, which have become regular occurrences and have characterized life in Nigeria. Several lives have been lost as a result of terrorist, insurgent and other attacks in schools in Ebonyi state, and Ebonyi L.G.A in particular has become hot spots where cases of insecurity are recorded. The challenges teachers are facing in secondary schools in Ebonyi Local Government Area are due to some environmental factors which are equally affecting teachers' productivity due to anxiety, fear, distortion in school sessions, induced by some insecurities such as kidnapping, terrorising, community clash, Fulani/herdsmen attacks amongst others. Other challenges affecting teachers' productivity in Ebonyi L.G.A. include poor funding by the state and federal government, poor classroom security facilities, as some classrooms are without doors, windows etc and teachers often times are attacked through these broken doors and windows. In some schools in Ebonyi L.G.A, there are no security personnel to monitor and guide schools against hoodlums and invaders Etor, Eyo & Ukpabio (2020). All these make school environments in Ebonyi L.G.A insecure. In the light of these challenges, this study ascertained the perceived influence of school environmental insecurity on teachers using Ebonyi L.G.A of Ebonyi state as the case study.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the perceived environmental insecurity challenges prevalent in secondary schools in Ebonyi L.G.A.?

2. What are the effects of environmental insecurity on teachers’ productivity in secondary schools in Ebonyi L.G.A.?

### **Methods**

This study was a descriptive survey research design and was carried in public secondary Schools in Ebonyi L.G.A., Ebonyi state with 17 government public secondary schools. The population for this study comprised of all 538 teachers in the entire 17 government public secondary schools in the state. The sample consists of (120) teachers purposively drawn from the total population of (538) teachers. The researcher first sampled A 31 item structured questionnaire’ titled ‘Perceived Influence of School Environmental Insecurity on Teacher Productivity Questionnaire’ (PISEITPQ), developed by the researcher was used for data collection and divided into clusters Cluster A dealt with Perceived environmental insecurities in secondary schools in Ebonyi state with response option of Exist/Prevalent and Not Exist/Not Prevalent while Cluster B dealt with the effect of environmental insecurities on teachers’ productivity. The instrument used four-point scaled response options of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire items were organized based on the specific purposes of the study and research questions. The instrument was subjected to validation by three experts and reliability of internal consistency was tested through trial of the instrument on 20 students Government teachers in Ezza North L.G.A of Ebonyi State which are not part of the study. A reliability index of 0.70 was realized which shows that the instrument was reliable. The Research questions were analysed using frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation.

### **Results**

#### **Research Question One: What are the perceived environmental insecurities that exist in secondary schools in Ebonyi L.G.A.?**

**Table 1: Responses on percentage distribution of the perceived environmental insecurities that exist in secondary schools in Ebonyi L.G.A.**

| S/N | Item                                     | N   | %   | Remarks             |
|-----|--|-----|-----|---------------------|
| 1   | Kidnapping                               | 120 | 77% | exist/prevalent     |
| 2   | IPOB activities                          | 120 | 76% | exist/prevalent     |
| 3   | Fulani herdsmen                          | 120 | 62% | exist/prevalent     |
| 4   | Burglary                                 | 120 | 49% | exist/not prevalent |
| 5   | Community clashes                        | 120 | 75% | exist/prevalent     |
| 6   | Act of terrorism                         | 120 | 51% | exist/prevalent     |
| 7   | Lack of classroom and office protections | 120 | 74% | exist/prevalent     |
| 8   | Banditry activities                      | 120 | 62% | exist/prevalent     |
| 9   | Sit at home enforcers                    | 120 | 75% | exist/prevalent     |
| 10  | Student to teacher abuses                | 120 | 56% | exist/prevalent     |
| 11  | Unconducive classroom environment        | 120 | 79% | exist/prevalent     |
| 12  | Regular fighting among students          | 120 | 76% | exist/prevalent     |

The result in Table 1 shows percentage score on the perceived environmental insecurities that affect teachers’ productivity in secondary schools in Ebonyi L.G.A. Scores from 50% indicated perceived environmental insecurities that affect teachers’ productivity, while scores below 50% were not perceived environmental insecurities that affect teachers’ productivity. The result shows that items 1,2,3,5, 6, 8,7,9,11,10 and 12 scored above 50% and were all

perceived as environmental insecurities that affect teachers’ productivity in secondary schools in Ebonyi L.G.A, while item 4 scored 49% and was not perceived as environmental insecurity that affect teachers’ productivity in secondary schools in Ebonyi L.G.A. It therefore implies that kidnapping, Banditry activities, community clashes, lack of classroom and office protections, sit at home enforcers, unconducive classroom environment and regular fighting among students were the perceived environmental insecurities that affect teachers’ productivity Ebonyi L.G.A.

**Research Question two: What are the effects of environmental insecurities on teachers’ productivity in secondary schools in Ebonyi L.G.A.?**

**Table 2: Mean Responses on the effect of environmental insecurities on teachers’ productivity in Ebonyi L.G.A.**

| S/N: | Item Statement                        | N   | $\bar{x}$ | S.D  | Remarks |
|------|---------------------------------------|-----|-----------|------|---------|
| 1    | Lateness to schools                   | 120 | 4.00      | .418 | Agree   |
| 2    | Absent from school                    | 120 | 3.97      | .59  | Agree   |
| 3    | Inability to complete scheme of work  | 120 | 3.90      | .312 | Agree   |
| 4    | Low motivation to work                | 120 | 3.95      | .84  | Agree   |
| 5    | Poor job satisfaction                 | 120 | 3.09      | .261 | Agree   |
| 6    | Lack of teachers-student relationship | 120 | 3.81      | .98  | Agree   |
| 7    | Inability to attend students’ needs   | 120 | 2.97      | .76  | Agree   |
| 8    | Poor attitude to teaching             | 120 | 3.55      | .54  | Agree   |
| 9    | Hostility on students                 | 120 | 3.64      | .342 | Agree   |
|      | Cluster Mean and S.D                  | 120 | 3.65      | .560 | Agree   |

Table 2 shows the mean and the standard deviation of responses on the effect of environmental insecurities on teachers in secondary schools in Ebonyi L.G.A. The table reveals that the mean rating for all the 9 items range from 2.97 to 4.0 while the standard deviation rating ranges from 0.261 to 0.84. The grand mean rating and the standard deviation rating are 3.65 and 0.56 respectively. The grand mean rating of 3.65 is above 2.50 which is the bench mark value. This implies that there are effects of environmental insecurities on teachers in secondary schools in Ebonyi L.G.A.

**Discussion**

The result of the findings revealed that there is perceived environmental insecurities that affect teachers’ productivity in Ebonyi L.G.A. These perceived environmental insecurities in the local government include: kidnapping, community clashes, lack of classroom and office protections, sit at home enforcers, unconducive classroom environment and regular fighting. Joshua (2018) had earlier pointed out that terrorism, kidnapping, insurgency, socio ethno-religious conflicts, and several other acts of criminality and insecurities have risen and are fast spreading across Nigeria, and Ebonyi state is not an exception, thus, insecurity remaining a great challenge, most particularly to schools across the nation. To collaborate this finding, Isaac (2022) had maintained that on a daily basis, the media has continued to highlight and discuss incessant cases of armed robbery, kidnapping, bombings, abductions, rape, cultic activities and a high rise in ethnic and communal clashes, which have become regular occurrences and have fervently affected school systems and teacher output/productivity in several parts of Nigeria and in secondary schools in Ebonyi L.G.A. of Ebonyi state in particular.

The findings of the study show that there are effects of environmental insecurities on teachers in secondary schools in Ebonyi L.G.A. These effects as shown in the study include:

lateness to schools, absent from school, inability to complete scheme of work, low motivation to work, poor job satisfaction, lack of teacher-student relation, inability to attend to students' needs, poor attitude to teaching and hostility on students. In addition to the findings, Akintunde and Seizing-Musa (2016) noted that school environmental insecurity is a threat to learning and the prevailing peace within and around the schools which often has ripple effects on effective teacher productivity, learning and activities of such schools. In the West African Examination Council 2022 Report, the external results of schools in Ebonyi state are always bad as a result of poor teacher productivity which, mainly is attributed to poor teaching environment and security of schools. Furthermore, Ghazi, Shahzada, Tariq and Khan (2013) remarked that some teachers complain that they are bullied and that classrooms are overcrowded. All of these add together contribute to effects of environmental insecurities on teachers in secondary schools in Ebonyi L.G.A.

### **Recommendations of the study**

From the findings of the study, the researchers recommended the following

3. That proactive measure, towards settling dispute, curbing community clashes and crises, checkmating bandits/terrorist groups around communities and ensuring that school premises are adequately protected should be put in place by the government.
4. The federal government in collaboration with the state and local government should establish Nigeria Police Fore Department for school security.
5. The state to ensure that teachers are adequately motivated and protected from physical and psychological threats to ward off intruders from school premises so that they can have a sense of security and put in their best.

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