

PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL INSECURITY ON TERTIARY LEVEL STUDENTS' CREATIVE COMPETENCE

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Abstract

The study investigated the perceived effects of environmental insecurity on tertiary level students' creative competence. The descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Two research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. Three hundred and eighty-three (383) students randomly selected from tertiary institutions in Plateau State constituted the sample. There were 169 males and 214 females. A questionnaire titled, "Insecurity and Students' Creativity Questionnaire (ISCQ)" was employed to collect data. Research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation) while the hypothesis was tested at 0.05 significance level using t-test statistics. The findings indicated that insecurity of the school environment hampers students' creative competence. Some of the inhibitions are inability to express creative ideas, develop manipulative and problem-solving skills. Recommendations made included provision of functional security cameras and gadgets in schools.

Keywords: Environmental insecurity, creative competence, impact.

Introduction

Teaching and learning activities can effectively take place in a safe school environment. Teachers' and students' concentration on learning activities and comprehension of learning tasks are enhanced in safe school environments. A secured school environment brightens the future of the Nigerian child.

However, insecurity within the Nigerian school environment (especially in certain parts of the country), is increasingly becoming a menace. Since Nigerian President Buhari was sworn-in (precisely in May 2015), the insurgents, specifically, Boko Haram have stepped up attacks on innocent citizens claiming 830 lives in just two months (Vanguard, 2015). Many Nigerians no longer feel safe as a result of bombings and kidnappings by Boko Haram insurgents. In April 2014, 276 Chibok school girls preparing for West African Examination Council (WAEC) papers were kidnapped from GSS Chibok, Borno State by Boko Haram insurgents. Majority of these girls are yet to be found after a year.

Also, in June 2014, fifteen (15) students were killed in a school in Kano (Uzochukwu, 2015). Environmental insecurity is responsible for the closure of many schools in Borno and Yobe States for several months. A number of the schools have been converted to camps for the Internally Displaced People (IDPs). According to Ameh (2015), recently, lawmakers from Borno State appealed for re-opening of some schools in major towns in their state if adequate protection will be provided for staff and students.

In other parts of the country (especially, in the Niger-Delta areas), and some parts of the South East like Abia and Imo states (Onifade, Imhonopi, & Moses, 2013) increasing kidnapping activities are posing threats to security in schools. School environments are constantly faced by unpredicted violence which cause insecurity (Ekejiuba &

Emetarom, 2012). Children, men, women, teachers and lecturers are kidnapped for ransom payment. According to Hurwitz, 1996, insecurity in school environment hinders students from concentrating on learning. Lack of concentration on learning activities hampers students' creativity. In line with this, Robinson (2013) submitted that creativity is a pre-requisite for young people to be successful and fulfilled. Creativity thrives in a safe learning environment.

Creativity has been defined in different ways. Levin (1978) defined creativity as a special way of perceiving the world, as well as the new ideas and intervention or works of art. According to Feldman (2000), creativity is the combination of ideas in novel ways. More recently, Chavez-Fakle (2010) submitted that creativity entails generating new things or transforming already existing things. These definitions generally indicate that creativity generally indicate that creativity involves new or novel ways of doing things, adventures and problem-solving. Creativity can therefore be defined as an individual's ability to produce ideas and products that are new, novel, and of high quality (Akintunde, 2015).

Since creativity involves divergent and reflective thinking in order to produce an original product or to find new ways of solving problems, then a safe school environment will promote this attribute in students. Unsafe school environment may impair the thought processes of students. Failure to provide well-secured learning environment for learners may weaken their

creative competence. Safety of Nigerian students in school is not a luxury but a necessity that demands urgent attention of stakeholders in the education sector. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to investigate the perceived effects of environmental insecurity on tertiary level students' creative competence.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine students' perception of the impact of environmental insecurity on their creative competence. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i) find out students' perception of insecurity impact on their creative competence.
- ii) determine male and female students' perception of insecurity impact on their creative competence.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i) What are students' perceptions of the impacts of school insecurity on their creative competence?
- ii) What are male and female perceptions of insecurity impact on their creative competence?

Hypothesis

- i) There is no statistically significant difference between male and female students' perceptions of insecurity impact on creative competence.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. This necessitated the use of a questionnaire to collect data from the sample of the population. The findings were then generalized to the entire population. The questionnaire was instrumental in eliciting information from students on their perception of insecurity and creativity. The population of this study consisted of 1,600 bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) students in tertiary institutions in plateau state, namely, University of Jos and Federal College of Education Pankshin. The participants were 383 year one (100 level) education students randomly selected from the two tertiary institutions. Out of this number, 214 respondents were females and 169 were males.

The instrument used in data collection was the questionnaire titled "Insecurity and Students' Creativity Questionnaire" (ISCQ). The instrument was validated by two experts from Test and Measurement and psychology units of Educational Foundations Department. The instrument has two sections. Section A consisted of personal demographic data, while section B contained 15 items that focused on eliciting information on the impact of insecurity of the school environment on students' creative competence. Respondents were required to rate the items in a 4-point scale of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree with 1,2,3, and 4 respectively.

The mean and t-test were used to analyse the data collected. The mean cut-off was 2.5

($4+3+2+1=10/4=2.5$). Therefore, the decision rule was that any item on 4- point scale with a mean score of 2.5 and above was classified as 'Agree' while any mean score below 2.5 was classified as 'Disagree'.

Results

Research Question 1:

What are students' perceptions of the impacts of school insecurity on their creative competence?

Table 1: Mean ratings of students' responses on school insecurity and creative competence.

S/N	Item Description	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Safe school environment enhances creative competence.	3.51	0.67	Agree
2.	Insecurity hinders development of creative ideas.	3.38	0.79	Agree
3.	Insecurity hinders thought processes.	3.48	0.73	Agree
4.	Insecurity hinders problem-solving abilities.	3.14	0.87	Agree
5.	Insecurity hampers curiosity.	3.02	0.82	Agree
6.	Safe school environment promotes application of learnt information to real-life situations.	3.61	0.63	Agree
7.	Insecurity hampers adventurous behaviour.	3.12	0.72	Agree
8.	Safe school environment encourages sensitivity in handling learning tasks.	3.46	0.67	Agree
9.	Insecurity hinders creative expression.	3.33	0.82	Agree
10.	Insecurity hinders innovative learning.	3.11	0.84	Agree
11.	Fear of being kidnapped hinders development of creative potentials.	2.98	0.89	Agree
12.	Insecurity hinders development of manipulative skills.	3.09	0.79	Agree
13.	Insecurity hinders designing of original products.	2.72	0.97	Agree
14.	Insecurity hinders students' capability to creatively do assignments or projects.	3.04	0.90	Agree
15.	Insecurity threatens students' creative answering of questions in test or examination.	2.76	1.05	Agree

Table 1 indicated that the respondents agreed on all items in the table (with each mean greater than 2.50). They perceived that safe school environments promote creative competence, application of learning to real-

life situations, encourages sensitivity to handling learning tasks. Also, that insecurity hinders the thought processes of students, curiosity, problem-solving capabilities and creative expression of students.

Research Question 2:

What are the male and female students'

perceptions of insecurity impact on their creative competence?

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Male and Female Students on Insecurity and Creative Competence.

S/NO.	ITEM DESCRIPTION	MALE (Mean)	FEMALE (Mean)
	Insecurity hinders:		
1.	Creative competence	3.45	3.55
2.	Creative ideas	3.33	3.42
3.	Thought processes	3.41	3.54
4.	Problem-solving ability	3.07	3.20
5.	Curiosity	2.96	3.07
6.	Application of information	3.55	3.66
7.	Adventurous behaviour	3.13	3.11
8.	Sensitivity to learning tasks	3.46	3.46
9.	Creative expression	3.30	3.36
10.	Innovative learning	3.08	3.14
11.	Creative potentials	2.90	3.04
12.	Manipulative skills	3.03	3.13
13.	Design of original products	2.70	2.74
14.	Creative completion of assignment/projects	2.96	3.10
15.	Creative answering of questions	2.59	2.90

* Decision – Agreed in all cases.

In table 2, male and female tertiary institutions agreed that insecurity affects students' creative competence in various ways (with each mean greater than 2.50). The five (5) most perceived effects for males are on Application of Information, Sensitivity to Learning Tasks, Creative Competence, Thought Processes and Creative Expression. For female respondents, the five most perceived effects are on creative competence, thought processes, sensitivity to tasks,

creative ideas and creative expression.

The mean scores of male and female respondents were further subjected to t-test analysis, to test for significance.

Hypothesis 1:

There is no statistically significant difference between male and female students' perceptions of insecurity impact on creative competence.

Table 3:

t-test on Male and Female Students' Perceived Effects of Insecurity on Creative Competence.

Gender	N	Mean	df	t-Cal	t-Crit	P>0.05	Decision
Male	169	3.13	381	-1.00	1.96	0.16	Not Significant
Female	2.14	3.23					

Table 3 showed that at 0.05 level of significance, the t-Cal (-1.00) is less than t-Crit (1.96). Also, P(0.16) is greater than 0.05.

All these indicated that the null hypothesis should be accepted. Therefore, both male and female perceptions of the impact of

insecurity on creative competence do not differ significantly.

Discussion

Analyses of the students' responses indicated that insecurity affects students' creative competence by hindering their thought processes, creative expression development of manipulative and problem-solving skills, amongst others. Both male and female students also expressed similar perceptions about these factors. These findings go to corroborate Hurwitz (1996) submission that insecurity often endangers teachers and students and hampers students from concentration on learning.

Also, Maduabum (2010) submitted that there are impediments to the development of creativity in children and these should be addressed. The results of this study suggested the need to address insecurity of the school environment and so pave way for safe-school environment that will promote students' creative competence.

Conclusion

Security is a basic human need that is vital to learning in schools. Insecurity has been found to exert negative impact on students' creative competence. Recommendations on how to overcome insecurity have been made. It is hoped that if the school authorities, students, teachers and government at all levels, play their parts, safety in our school environments will be the order of the day and this will enhance students' creative skills.

Recommendations

- There should be security committees on campuses of tertiary institutions that will train and retrain members of the institution including students in security activities, this will help the student to be more security alert and be actively involved in ensuring security around them. This will help avert tragedies.
- Security operatives to be stationed in strategic positions in different places within the school campuses and students' residents. These security personnels should ensure all persons coming into and out of the campuses are well identified and screened.
- Students' determination to explore creative ideas in spite of crises situations should be encouraged. They should also be given opportunities to come up with novel ideas in their various areas of study on how best to prevent and or manage insecurity situations in the school environment.
- Teachers should also create a free atmosphere for students to freely express themselves in independent, varied, and novel ways.
- Tertiary institutions located within crisis prone areas should establish and maintain cordial relationships with their host communities for peaceful co-existence.

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