



Readiness of Selected Stakeholders in Implementing Disaster-Proof Education in Bayelsa State, Nigeria: Policies and Partnerships

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the readiness of selected stakeholders in implementing disaster-proof education during disruptions. The study highlighted two objectives and adopted descriptive survey design. The level of readiness of the selected stakeholders was measured in terms of policies and partnerships. Two research questions alongside two hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study. The population for the study comprises 188 staff from six selected agencies. Non-proportional stratified random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 64 staff. The researcher-made Stakeholders' Readiness in Implementing Disaster-Proof Education Questionnaire was the instrument used to appraise the stakeholders' readiness in implementing disaster-proof education. Data gathered were analysed using number count, simple percentage, mean and standard deviation to answer research questions, while the hypotheses were tested using one way Analysis of Variance. The instrument was validated and tested for reliability. The reliability of the instrument was computed using Cronbach alpha method of internal consistency of .99. The findings indicated that there is no policy put in place and no partnership has been established. Recommendations made, based on the findings, include formulating policies on the implementation of technology-enabled disaster-proof education and establishing partnerships with international donor agencies, mobile network service providers, etc.

Keywords: Disaster-Proof Education, Stakeholder Readiness, Implementation, Policies, Partnerships.

INTRODUCTION

Disasters come in various forms such as floods, disease outbreaks, earthquakes, etc. Flood causes loss of lives and properties, disease outbreak, economic downturn and fuel scarcity. The 2022 flood catastrophe in Nigeria, in which Bayelsa State was badly affected, destroyed government's valuable infrastructures such as roads, bridges, schools, hospitals and electricity, etc. The flood also destroyed cash crops, fish ponds, poultries, shops and markets, etc. Ashley (2015) asserted that disasters can have many effects on people and the environment, which include but are not limited to injury, death, disrupted services, loss of property, or changes in landscape.

Disaster-proof education is education that is not affected by any form of emergency; flood disaster, disease outbreak, crisis or conflict, etc. Natural disasters and other emergencies impede access to regular school/classes but cannot hinder access to disaster-proof education. Learning continuity in the face of disruptions becomes an indispensable factor. It is therefore appropriate to have strategies, policies or guidelines put in place for the smooth running of disaster-proof education in times of flood disaster or other emergencies.

Education policies and practices play critical roles in bringing technological solutions to the education system amidst displaced and emergency settings. The essence of a policy framework for learning continuity during flood disaster and other emergencies necessitates preparation for and response to class disruptions. The Federal Ministry of Education policy's comprehensive framework for safety and security in schools amongst others, stated the plan for education continuity in the face of expected hazards. It further affirmed the responsibility of the federal government to provide learners inclusive, equitable and quality education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Disaster-proof education is a concept that refers to the ability of education systems and institutions to continue providing learning opportunities during disasters or emergencies, ensuring the continuity of education and minimising disruption. Padernal (2020), an advocate of disaster-proof education defined disaster-proof education as a proactive measure that makes teaching and learning continue even when there are calamities, natural disasters and man-made disasters. She reiterated that disaster-proof education is a measure that can be used to avoid taking extra days for makeup classes and be ready in a situational occurrence with the presence of technology in education.

Disaster-proof education involves implementing policies, procedures, and infrastructure that ensure continuity of education and minimise disruption during disasters. LaBonte, Barbour & Mongrain (2022) argues that more planning and deliberate attention must be provided to teacher preparation,

infrastructure, education policy, and resources to be able to maintain quality instructional continuity. Disaster-proof education, if given the right policy and infrastructural framework, has the tendency to support the continuity of education in the face of flood hazards like open, distance and flexible learning (ODFL) through an organised, unified and widespread means.

Preparing to move education outside of traditional physical classrooms in response to emergencies requires thought, coordination and careful decision-making (Ali, 2020). UNICEF (2006) emphasised that when emergencies strike, they do more harm where systems and people are not robust enough to take the shock. Government agencies, school administrators and educators can work together to develop and implement disaster-proof education plans that include procedures for using technological tools to provide learning for students during emergencies. They should ensure that the necessary infrastructure and resources are put in place to reach individual learners even in remote areas.

Depending on a government's capacity during education in emergencies, intergovernmental organisations and NGOs can provide high-level support for emergency preparedness, response, and recovery (Robinson & Curtiss, 2020). Therefore, good development policies and practices are essential not only on their own merits but also to lessen the shock of emergencies and to promote quick recovery (UNICEF, 2006).

Successful collaboration and coordination are needed to plan and implement education interventions between governments and internal and external agents (Robinson & Curtiss, 2020). Tarricone, Mestan and Teo (2021) maintained that policymakers need to consider plans and processes that involve relevant agents in collaboration and coordination activities during education in emergencies.

Overall, a collaborative approach involving various stakeholders is necessary to ensure that schools and students are prepared for emergencies and can continue to learn even in the face of disaster. By establishing these partnerships, stakeholders can work together to ensure that schools are better equipped to cope with emergencies such as flood disasters. Through these partnerships, stakeholders can also reduce the impact of disasters on schools and communities, and promote resilience and recovery.

The study is anchored on stakeholder and contingency theories. Stakeholder theory was propounded by [R. Edward Freeman](#) in 1984 after he published a book titled, "Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach." In a pragmatic viewpoint, stakeholder theory placed ethics in business as a problem-solving factor which makes our everyday lives work. The stakeholder theory contends that government as an organisation is made up of different groups of people called stakeholders. According to the theory, individuals and groups seek common services and administrative actions from government.

Government stakeholders encompass all those involved in implementing various government policies, regulations, and actions. The theory also explained how government as an organisation should attempt to satisfy the needs, interest and viewpoint of all the groups that it serves. The theory is related to the present study as it strongly advocates in-depth and smooth relationship and partnership amongst selected stakeholders to meet the learning needs of learners in the face of disruptions. The theory also promotes a successful implementation of disaster-proof education, which is structured to add value to both teachers and students who are the main users and recipients.

Contingency theory or model was developed by Fred E. Fiedler in 1964 following an article titled "Contingency Model of Leadership Effectiveness" which he published. The theory posited that success hinges on the leadership style of a leader depending on the type of challenging occurrence or situational context and environment around him. Gordon (2020) affirmed that "contingencies arise from various environmental factors and that managers must take into account these contingencies when making decisions that affect the organisation."

Contingency theory also proposes structural changes or designs, leadership styles, and control systems in an organisation that allow it to react to environmental contingencies (Gordon, 2020). He reiterated that the theory pointed out three main factors such as traits, behaviour and situation which influence leadership styles. Every leadership style befits a peculiar challenge and entails both the strengths and weaknesses of leaders. According to Miles (2022), "contingency leadership theory argues that they must look within, work to understand themselves and develop their strengths, and then approach challenges objectively to determine what (and who) can lead."

Empirical studies on policy, Nwachukwu, Ugwu and Wogu (2021) in their work "digital learning in post COVID-19 era: policy options and prospects for quality education in Nigeria." The researchers used documentary methods and collected data through qualitative sources such as government publications, newspapers, textbooks, periodicals, journal publications and online materials for the study. The finding showed that though meaningful efforts have been made by few of the private universities, the public universities are not good enough for full implementation of digital learning.

Osias et. al. (2023) carried out a study on moving beyond the new normal: understanding flexible learning options (FLOs) on the parameters of basic education learning continuity plan (BE-LCP). The study adopted a descriptive-survey method of research design and stratified random sampling approach to choose 50 students from Senior High School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) and 20 senior high school teachers from PAU Excellencia Global Academy Foundation, Inc. A questionnaire was used as an instrument to gather data. Data gathered were analysed using percentage, mean, ranking and t-test. Findings revealed that respondents concurred on the status of the application of the school's policies on alternative delivery modalities and learning continuity plans.

In a related study on Towards an Efficient Integrated Distance and Blended Learning Model: How to minimise the impact of COVID-19 on Education conducted by Al-Hunaiyyan, Alhajri, and Bimba (2021). The sample size comprised 4,024 educators and students in private and public-sector educational institutions in Kuwait. Instrument for data collection used in the study was a questionnaire. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) were used to analyse the collected data. The reliability of the instrument was found to be 0.901 using Cronbach's Alpha. Findings indicated that respondents were slightly supportive of e-learning adoption, with a majority acknowledging its advantages as well as the need for development of technological competencies required for the operation of the proposed e-learning programs.

On partnership, Peregrino et. al. (2022) investigated assessment of school Learning Continuity Plan (LCP) implementation: Basis for policy formulation. The study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods and used purposive sampling to select 20 public elementary and secondary schools in the Province of Palawan, in the Philippines. Instrument used for data collection is an interview questionnaire. Mean and percentage were employed to analyse quantitative data gathered. Findings revealed that the schools' Learning Continuity Plan is still on the initial implementation yet to be fully accomplished; problems involving funding, stakeholders' collaboration, institutional policy compliance which are detrimental to smooth learning continuity plan implementation.

Lozano (2022) in a study on contextual operationalization of the school learning continuity plan: Its correlation to school heads' performance. This study made use of descriptive correlational research design. The population comprised 4,681 teachers and 260 elementary school heads, while simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample size made up of 369 teachers and 158 school heads. Survey questionnaire was used as a research instrument for data gathering. The data were analysed using weighted mean, standard deviation, t-test, and Spearman's Rho. Findings revealed that school heads' performance in terms of principals' community and stakeholder partnership was very high, same for teachers and the level of the context operationalization of the school learning continuity plan in terms of the principals' provision of learning resources for teachers also was very high.

Guo-Brennan et. al (2016) carried out a study on multi-stakeholder partnership in Teacher Education and Development. The study was carried out in Kenya. The study adopted a concurrent triangulation approach. Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting sample size which comprised 17 participants; 3 principals and 14 teachers from 4 schools. A questionnaire, interviews, focus groups and document analysis were instruments used for data collection. Findings indicated that Kenyan schools and communities examined in this study received development assistance carried out by a multi-stakeholder partnership on the Canadian side, which include UPEI, FHF, PEI school boards and schools, and numerous PEI community members who volunteered their time and resources.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Flood occurrences in Nigeria in the past 10 years, of which Bayelsa State was badly affected, forcefully displaced its victims and hampered the education process of pupils and students which led to the closure of schools. This disruptive event caused students to experience learning loss and exposed them to different forms of vulnerabilities and abuse. Worse still, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) predicted a flood occurrence this year, 2023 which will still disrupt academic activities and negatively impact learners.

In a bid to curb this menace, the Federal Ministry of Education formulated a National Policy legal framework of 2021 on safety, security and violence-free schools with its implementing guidelines to institutionalise mechanisms for addressing disasters and focusing on promoting education continuity. Flood-prone states like Bayelsa can achieve education continuity amidst disasters and other emergencies with this policy framework. Disaster-proof education is an intervention that enables students to sustain learning continuity amidst disasters using educational technology tools.

AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the readiness of selected stakeholders in implementing disaster-proof education in the face of hazards in Bayelsa State. Therefore, the study intended to:

1. examine the policies that have been put in place to ensure learning continuity amidst flood disaster and other emergencies.
2. ascertain partnerships stakeholders have established for the success of disaster-proof education during flood disaster and other emergencies.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What policies have been put in place to ensure learning continuity amidst flood disaster and other emergencies?
2. What partnerships have stakeholders established for the success of disaster-proof education during flood disaster and other emergencies?

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the categories of respondents' responses to policies that have been put in place to ensure learning continuity amidst flood disaster and other emergencies.
2. There is no significant difference in the categories of respondents' responses to partnerships that stakeholders have established for the success of disaster-proof education during flood disaster and other emergencies.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey was adopted in the study to find out the level of readiness of selected stakeholders in implementing disaster-proof education in terms of policies and partnerships. Descriptive survey is deemed fit because data were gathered from sample drawn from a given population from six ministries and parastatals in Bayelsa State and certain features of the sample were described without being manipulated by the researcher. Nwankwo (2013) stated that in descriptive survey, the researcher collects data from a sample drawn from a given population and describes certain features of the sample as they are at the time of the study without manipulating the variables of the study. Stakeholders' readiness in implementing disaster-proof education questionnaire (SRIDPEQ) was the instrument used to gather data.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What policies have been put in place to ensure learning continuity amidst flood disaster and other emergencies?

Table 1: Number count, percentage, mean and SD showing selected stakeholders' responses on if there are policies that have been put in place to ensure learning continuity amidst flood disaster and other emergencies.

S/N	Policies	Number Count	Percentage	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Yes; Policies are in place with description.	0	0	0	0	No policies in place
2	No; Policies are not in place with description.	54	93%	30.00	5.49	
3	Not so sure policies are in place with description.	4	7%	12.88	12.40	

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the categories of respondents' responses to policies that have been put in place to ensure learning continuity amidst flood disaster and other emergencies.

Table 2: One Way ANOVA showing the no significant difference in the categories of stakeholders' responses to policies that have been put in place to ensure learning continuity amidst flood disaster and other emergencies.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3544.440	2	1772.220	45.076	.000
Within Groups	2162.405	55	39.316		
Total	5706.845	57			

Table 1 presents the responses of selected stakeholders regarding the existence of policies to ensure learning continuity during flood disasters and other emergencies. The table includes the number count, percentage, mean, and standard deviation (SD) for each response category. As can be observed, there were no respondents who indicated that policies are in place to ensure learning continuity amidst flood disasters and other emergencies. The number count, percentage, mean, and standard deviation for this category are all zero. The table also shows responses of selected stakeholders who indicated that no policies are in place to ensure learning continuity amidst flood disasters and other emergencies. This category received the highest number of responses, with 54 participants (93% of the total respondents) indicating that there are no policies in place. The mean for this category is 30.00 and SD of 5.49, suggesting that most respondents strongly believe that there are no policies. The table further shows that 4 respondents (7% of the total) expressed uncertainty about whether policies are in place. The mean for this category is 12.88 and SD of 12.40, indicating a relatively lower level of certainty.

Based on the responses provided in the table, it can be concluded that the majority of selected stakeholders (93%) believe that there are no policies in place to ensure learning continuity during flood disasters and other emergencies. Only a small proportion of respondents (7%) expressed uncertainty about the existence of such policies while no respondent as well as no proportion of respondents (0%) expressed certainty about the existence of any policy.

Similarly, table 2 reveals that F – value of 45.076 df = (3,57) P. 000 <.05., i.e., p = .000. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the categories of respondents' response to policies that have been put in place to ensure learning continuity amidst flood disaster and other emergencies rejected and the alternate accepted. This implies that the categories of responses of selected stakeholders who indicated that no policies are in place to ensure learning continuity amidst flood disasters and other emergencies and those that expressed uncertainty about whether policies are in place to ensure learning continuity amidst flood disaster and other emergencies is statistically significant.

Research Question 2: What partnerships have stakeholders established for the success of disaster-proof education during flood disaster and other emergencies?

Table 3: Number count, percentage, mean and SD showing selected stakeholders' responses on if there are partnerships that stakeholders have established for the success of disaster-proof education during flood disaster and other emergencies.

S/N	Partnerships	Number Count	Percentage	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Yes; partnerships have been established.	4	9%	5.500	9.00	No partnership
2	No; partnerships have not been established.	49	84%	11.04	6.55	
3	Not so sure if partnerships have been established.	5	8%	9.800	19.67	

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the categories of respondents' responses to partnerships that stakeholders have established for the success of disaster-proof education during flood disaster and other emergencies.

Table 4: One Way ANOVA showing the no significant difference in the categories of stakeholders' responses to partnerships that stakeholders have established for the success of disaster-proof education during flood disaster and other emergencies.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	116.626	2	58.313	.833	.440
Within Groups	3851.718	55	70.031		
Total	3968.345	57			

Table 3 provides information on the responses of selected stakeholders regarding the establishment of partnerships for the success of disaster-proof education during flood disasters and other emergencies. The table includes the number count, percentage, mean, and standard deviation (SD) for each response category. According to the table, four respondents (9% of the total) stated that partnerships have been established for the success of disaster-proof education. The mean for this category is 5.500, and SD is 9.00. The table shows also that the majority of respondents (84%) indicated that partnerships have not been established for the success of disaster-proof education. This category received the highest number of responses, with 49 participants. The mean for this category is 11.04, indicating a higher level of agreement among the respondents. The standard deviation of 6.55. Five respondents (8% of the total) expressed uncertainty about whether partnerships have been established. The mean for this category is 9.800, indicating a relatively high level of uncertainty. The standard deviation of 19.67 suggests considerable variability in the responses within this category.

Also, table 4 shows that F – value of .833 $df = (3,57)$ $P .440 > .05$, ie., $p = .440$. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the category of respondent's response to partnerships that stakeholders have established for the success of disaster-proof education during flood disaster and other emergencies is accepted while the alternate is rejected. This implies that the categories of responses of selected stakeholders who indicated that there were partnerships that stakeholders have established for the success of disaster-proof education during flood disaster and other emergencies, those who indicated that there were no partnerships that stakeholders have established for the success of disaster-proof education during flood disaster and other emergencies and those that expressed uncertainty about whether policies are in place to ensure learning continuity amidst flood disaster and other emergencies differs statistically.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Level of readiness of selected stakeholders in the implementation of disaster-proof education in terms of policies

The result of research question 1 presented on table 1 reveals that majority of the stakeholders from the selected ministries and parastatals indicated no policies in place compared to other stakeholders who expressed uncertainty. The finding showed that majority of the selected stakeholders believed that there is no policy put in place for the implementation of disaster-proof education or learning continuity during flood disaster and other emergencies. The finding implies that the stakeholder in charge of education policies has not formulated any policy on the implementation of learning continuity or disaster-proof education during flood occurrences and other emergencies.

However, the finding is surprising, because the Federal Ministry of Education policy promotes education continuity in the face of expected hazards. This could be attributed to the policymaking body not yet ready or perhaps, at the planning stage to put in place measures to support learning continuity or disaster-proof education amidst flood disaster and other emergencies. They have been tasked with implementing new teaching practices in ways that will promote student learning and maximise student safety (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2020b). It calls for an action that would study the problems and changes that arise as a result of emergencies to develop and design educational policies and measures ensuring a lesser adverse impact on the education of such crises in the future (Peregrino et. al., 2020). If there is a policy put in place to this effect, it will help curb the adverse effect of learning loss of learners and reduce the number of out-of-school children.

Muyot and Edaniol (2022) stressed that a learning continuity plan seeks to ensure that students' learning progresses even amidst disasters such as natural calamities, storms, fires, and pandemics. They further emphasised that this plan overcomes obstacles created by the disasters through innovative means of teaching and learning, keeping students on track with their courses. Peregrino et. al. (2020) stated that due to disruptive events, such as COVID-19 pandemic, which affect the operations of schools, a framework that will govern and serve as the basis for policy planning and decision-making in the form of learning continuity plans must be prepared carefully. Whether expected or not, any distraction affecting the teaching and learning processes such as coronavirus could pose an adverse effect on all the key players in education (Citrix, 2015).

Conversely, the very few selected stakeholders who expressed uncertainty may not be knowledgeable of any such policy.

The finding of this study disagrees with some past researchers; Osias et. al. (2023); whose findings revealed the school's policies on alternative delivery modalities and learning continuity plans.

The finding correlates with those of Nwachukwu, Ugwu and Wogu (2021); Al-Hunaiyyan, Alhajri and Bimba (2021); which showed meaningful efforts made by few private universities, the incompetence of public universities for full implementation of digital learning despite the slight support of e-learning adoption.

Level of readiness of selected stakeholders in the implementation of disaster-proof education in terms of partnerships

Table 3 reveals that majority of the selected stakeholders indicated that partnerships have not been established compared to a very small proportion of stakeholders who indicated that partnerships have been established, while a very few others expressed uncertainty. The findings showed that a greater percentage of the selected stakeholders believed that partnerships have not been established in the implementation of disaster-proof education or learning continuity during flood disaster and other emergencies in Bayelsa State. The finding implies that education stakeholders have not established partnerships with ministries, departments and agencies such as National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Ministry of Health to develop emergency medical care training for teachers and administrators, Ministry of Information, Orientation and Strategy to develop plans for communicating with students, parents and guardians during emergencies, Ministry of Communication, Science & Technology or e-Governance Bureau or Science & Technology Education Board for training of teachers and students on the use of technological infrastructure for learning during emergencies, for the implementation of disaster-proof education during flood disasters and other emergencies in Bayelsa State.

The finding is unexpected and surprising, because for the implementation of disaster-proof education to be successful, education stakeholders must partner with other stakeholders. This is attributed to lack of advocacy to mobilise partners. Advocacy and communication help to mobilise donors, governments, partners and affected populations to quickly restore educational activities and prevent the further collapse of the social fabric (UNICEF, 2006).

The finding corresponds with the findings of Peregrino et. al. (2022); which revealed problems involving stakeholders' collaboration and institutional policy compliance as areas of concern, which are detrimental to the smooth LCP implementation. Conversely, schools were able to implement collaboration, planning and review, strong communication, and transparency achieving the goals of education amidst problems.

On the other hand, the finding does not concur with the findings of Lozano (2022); which revealed a very high stakeholder partnership between teachers and the level of context operationalization of the school learning continuity plan. Also, the findings of Guo-Brennan et. al (2016) indicated that Kenyan schools and communities received development assistance from a multi-stakeholder partnership on the Canadian side, which include UPEI, FHF, PEI school boards and schools, and numerous PEI community members who volunteered their time and resources.

CONCLUSION

Readiness of selected stakeholders in implementing disaster-proof education is a critical success factor which cannot be downplayed. The findings of this study showed that disaster-proof education can be successfully implemented based on the readiness of selected stakeholders to put adequate policy measures in place and establish partnerships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. The state Ministry of Education should formulate policies on the implementation of technology-enabled disaster-proof education or learning continuity programme in the face of future hazards.
2. The Ministry of Education should build partnerships with other stakeholders including international donor agencies such as World Bank, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF), Global Partnership for Education (GPE), etc., LMS providers like Google, Microsoft, etc., NGOs (non-governmental organisations), communities to allocate funds for a successful implementation that ensures that children continue their learning during flood occurrence and other emergencies.

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