

WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS OF TOILET FACILITIES USED IN BASIC SCHOOLS? INSIGHTS FROM SOME SELECTED BASIC SCHOOLS IN THE EASTERN AND VOLTA REGIONS OF GHANA

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ABSTRACT

Provision of sustainable clean toilet facilities in schools is critical for good health and well-being of school children. This demand has been heightened in Sustainable Development Goal Six. However, the conditions of toilet facilities use in the basic schools in Ghana is unknown. This study explores the perceptions of pupils and teachers on the conditions of toilet facilities available to them in the basic schools. The study employed mixed methods—quantitative and qualitative approaches. Self-reported data on conditions of school toilets were collected from 400 pupils and 45 teachers in the selected schools using structured questionnaire, focus group discussions, and checklist observation. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and Chi-square test, and the qualitative data was also analyzed using thematic content analysis procedures. The results of the study showed that the conditions of toilet facilities used in the basic schools as revealed by pupils and teachers perceptions was very bad. This bad state of the school toilet system—inadequacy, lack of privacy, poor ventilation, inappropriate squat hole sizes, community and rodents encroachment, and inappropriate location of school toilets, constituted key situational factors preventing pupils from using the toilets. This, the study found to be both policy and situation-driven and thus, raises many questions about the health and environmental implications and level of attention the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD), Ministry of Education (MOE), and Ghana Education Service (GES) give to conditions of toilet facilities in the basic schools. Bivariate test analysis showed significant correlation between pupils' perceptions and poor quality of the school toilets. (Pupils: $r = -.122$, $p < 0.05$). Analysis of variance showed statistically significant mean difference between teachers perception about the following: pupils queuing to use the school toilet: mean square = 4.715, $F = .14624$, $p < 0.05$; privacy of toilet for both sexes: mean square = 2.115, $F = 14.675$, $p < 0.05$; and appropriateness of toilet squat holes: mean square = 1.677, $F = 11.816$, $p < 0.05$. The mean scores for other variables showed no statistically significant difference to report. Also, pair sample t-test showed statistically significant mean differences in toilet use by gender: mean = -1.26518, $t = -11.937$, $df = 312$, $p < 0.05$; settings: mean = -1.46326, $t = -14.729$, $df = 312$, $p < 0.05$; age: mean = 2.82748, $t = 19.389$, $df = 312$, $p < 0.05$. The study recommends that the MLGRD, MOE and the GES should set sanitation standards for the basic schools and also make it a national policy that schools are provided with descent toilet facilities and a strong monitoring system is put in place to check the implementation of school sanitation policies and programs. Teachers must also educate school children on proper use of toilets and the need to do so.

Keywords: Basic Schools, Toilet Quality, Health Implication, Ghana.