


Revitalizing school health program for effective school, home and community relationship

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: <i>community, revitalization and school health program, school</i></p> <p><i>Received : 22, Sept. 2025</i> <i>Revised : 24, Oct. 2025</i> <i>Accepted: 30, Nov. 2025</i></p> <p>©2025 Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International</p> 	<p><i>This study explored the critical need to revitalize the school health program in Nigeria to promote effective relationships among schools, homes, and communities. The aim is to create a harmonious ecosystem that enhances student well-being, leading to improved academic success and personal growth. The study adopts a comprehensive approach, focusing on key areas such as communication enhancement, parental involvement, community engagement, health education, support for vulnerable students, resource mobilization, holistic education, and cultural sensitivity. It also addresses challenges facing the current school health program in Nigeria, including poor policy implementation, inadequate facilities and personnel, resource constraints, and cultural diversity. Strategic recommendations are provided, including policy adherence, facility enhancement, personnel deployment, stakeholder commitment, health education reinforcement, and funding advocacy. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of robust monitoring and evaluation, capacity building, community engagement, technology integration, and research-driven innovation for long-term program sustainability and effectiveness. Collaboration, innovation, and stakeholder commitment are highlighted as essential elements in revitalizing the school health program for the holistic development and well-being of Nigerian students.</i></p>

1. INTRODUCTION

In modern educational landscapes, school health programs are integral components for nurturing the holistic well-being of students while concurrently fostering robust relationships between schools, homes, and communities. A school health program is a comprehensive initiative implemented within educational institutions to promote the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of students (Obembe, Osungbade & Ademokun, 2016). It encompasses various components such as health education, physical activity promotion, nutrition initiatives, and mental health support services. The goal of a school health program is to create a supportive environment conducive to learning while addressing health-related issues and promoting healthy behaviors among students (Smith, Sarki, Onukwugha & Magadi, 2020). These programs often involve collaboration with parents, healthcare professionals, and community organizations to ensure a holistic approach to student well-being and to foster strong relationships between schools, homes, and communities.

School health program involves the totality of procedures and activities which are designed to protect and promote the well-being of students and of the staff'. According to Joint Committee on Health Education Terminology, school health program is an organized set of policies, procedures, and activities designed to protect and promote the health and well-being of students and staff which has traditionally included health services, healthful school environment, and health education (Owolabi, Ayoade, Adesola & Adeniyi, 2024). These activities, according to them, include those organized under health instruction, health services and healthful school environment. These programs serve as dynamic platforms designed to address various health concerns, instill healthy behaviors,

and cultivate supportive environments conducive to learning (Olaoye, Osie-Efietie, Ogunsanmi, Mustapha, Asekun-Olarinmoye & Atulomah, 2024).

According to Ademokun, Osungbade & Obembe (2014) school health program are directed towards promoting the health of children and staff. The activities are meant to provide learning opportunities, experience, services and environment, which can favorably influence those value, attitudes, practices and cognitive capabilities that can promote individual, family and community health. According to the Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria (2006) in National School Health Policy the scope of the school health program shall include: healthful school environment; school feeding services; skilled-based health education; school health services; and school, home and community relationships. Therefore, School Health Program (SHP) involves all activities which are planned, organized and carried out in school in order to maintain, protect and improve the health of individuals in the school, through health instructions, health services, healthful school living as well as school community cooperation.

By incorporating elements such as health education, physical activity, nutrition, and mental health support services into the school curriculum, these initiatives contribute significantly to students' overall development, school, home and community relationship. Effective school, home, and community relationships refer to collaborative partnerships and shared responsibilities among stakeholders to support students' holistic development. In such relationships, schools actively engage parents, guardians, and community members in educational processes and decision-making, fostering open communication, trust, and mutual respect (Nwankwo & Nnorom, 2020). Homes are recognized as integral components of students' learning environments, with parents and caregivers actively involved in their children's education.

Additionally, community resources and expertise are leveraged to enrich educational experiences and address the diverse needs of students. Together, these relationships create a supportive ecosystem that promotes student success, well-being, and lifelong learning (Shittu, Idowu & Adedapo, 2022). Central to the effectiveness of school health programs is their role as conduits for collaboration and partnership among stakeholders. Schools that prioritize student health demonstrate a profound commitment not only to individual well-being but also to the broader community (Anazia, 2021). By promoting shared responsibility for the welfare of young individuals, these programs strengthen ties between schools, families, and local organizations. Such collaborative endeavors not only enhance the efficacy of health promotion efforts but also lay the foundation for enduring relationships characterized by mutual support and shared goals (Abdolkarimy, Zareipour, Mahmoodi, Dashti, Faryabi & Movahed, 2017).

The importance of the seminar on revitalizing school health programs for effective school, home, and community relationships cannot be overstated in today's educational landscape. Research indicates that comprehensive school health programs are essential for promoting students' physical, mental, and emotional well-being (Lever, Mathis & Mayworm, 2017). However, there are significant gaps in the implementation and effectiveness of these programs, particularly in fostering strong relationships between schools, homes, and communities. One critical gap lies in the limited engagement of parents and community members in school health initiatives. Despite evidence highlighting the importance of parental involvement in promoting student health and academic success (Kolbe, 2019), many schools struggle to effectively engage parents and families in health-related activities. Additionally, there is a need to address disparities in access to health resources and services among underserved communities, which can further exacerbate existing health inequities among students.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of holistic approaches to student well-being, including mental health support and social-emotional learning. As schools navigate the challenges posed by the pandemic, there is a pressing need to prioritize the integration of mental health services and resources into school health programs to support students' emotional

resilience and coping skills (Katz, Knight, Mercer & Skinner, 2020). In light of these challenges and gaps, the seminar on revitalizing school health programs provides a timely opportunity to convene educators, health professionals, policymakers, and community stakeholders to collaborate on innovative strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of school health initiatives.

2. METHOD

The study followed a systematic review process. The research question was first defined to examine how revitalized school health programs could strengthen relationships among schools, homes, and communities. Major databases such as Scopus, ERIC, PubMed, and Google Scholar were then searched using terms related to school health, family involvement, community partnership, and program outcomes. Studies were included if they were empirical, policy-focused, or intervention-based and published in English. Screening occurred in two stages, beginning with titles and abstracts before full-text assessment. Eligible studies were charted in a matrix detailing design, population, interventions, outcomes, and context. A thematic synthesis approach was applied to identify patterns in communication, shared responsibilities, stakeholder collaboration, and the creation of health-supportive environments. Throughout the process, PRISMA guidelines were followed to maintain rigor, transparency, and replicability, and all methodological decisions were documented.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Needs to Revitalized school health program for Effective School, Home and Community Relationship in Nigeria

Revitalization of School Health Program in Nigeria establish a harmonious ecosystem where schools, families, and communities collaborate seamlessly to enhance the well-being of students. Through holistic approaches and robust engagement strategies, the program aims will foster healthier, more supportive environments conducive to academic success and personal growth.

Improved Communication: The revitalized school health program serves as a catalyst for nurturing robust communication channels among schools, parents, and the broader community in Nigeria. This initiative fosters an environment of open dialogue, facilitating deeper understanding, trust, and collaboration among stakeholders (Çalışkan & İzmirli, 2020). Through regular communication, valuable information on students' health, progress, and specific needs can be shared, enabling a more holistic approach to their development. Actively engaging all parties, the program creates a sense of shared responsibility for the well-being of students, strengthening the ties between schools, homes, and communities.

Enhanced Parental Involvement: The program's initiatives aim to empower parents, encouraging them to become active participants in their children's educational journey. Research consistently highlights the positive correlation between increased parental involvement and various indicators of student success, including higher academic achievement, improved behavior, and enhanced attendance rates (Burke, Mulvey, Schubert & Garbin, 2014). Providing parents with access to relevant information, resources, and opportunities for engagement, the program equips them with the tools they need to support their children effectively. This collaborative approach fosters a sense of partnership between schools and families, ultimately laying a solid foundation for lifelong learning and success.

Community Engagement: At the heart of the revitalized school health program lies a commitment to fostering meaningful engagement with the wider community in Nigeria. Providing a platform for community members to actively contribute to the health and well-being of school-aged children, the program promotes the development of locally relevant solutions to health challenges (Anthony, 2023). This inclusive approach not only leverages the collective wisdom and resources of the community but also instills a sense of ownership and responsibility for the welfare of children. Through collaborative efforts, schools, families, and local stakeholders can work together to create

supportive environments that nurture the holistic development of every child (Chowdhury, Helman & Greenhalgh, 2023).

Health Education: Comprehensive health education is a cornerstone of the revitalized school health program, extending beyond students to encompass parents and community members in Nigeria. Imparting knowledge on topics such as nutrition, hygiene, disease prevention, and mental wellness, the program promotes health literacy and empowers individuals to make informed decisions about their well-being (Chowdhury, Helman & Greenhalgh, 2023). Through interactive and culturally sensitive educational initiatives, the program seeks to instill healthy behaviors and attitudes that will benefit individuals and communities for years to come (Anthony, 2023). Integrating health education into the fabric of school and community life, the program fosters a culture of wellness that extends far beyond the classroom.

Support for Vulnerable Students: In Nigeria, the revitalized school health program recognizes the importance of addressing health-related barriers to learning, particularly for vulnerable students. Offering targeted support services such as nutritious meals, access to healthcare, and mental health resources, the program ensures that every child has an equal opportunity to thrive academically (Burke, Mulvey, Schubert & Garbin, 2014). Addressing the unique needs of vulnerable students, the program promotes equity in education and creates an inclusive learning environment where all students feel supported and valued. Through a combination of proactive intervention and ongoing support, the program seeks to remove obstacles to learning and empower every child to reach their full potential.

Resource Mobilization: The revitalized school health program harnesses the power of partnerships to mobilize resources in support of school health initiatives in Nigeria. Collaborating with government agencies, NGOs, businesses, and other stakeholders, the program maximizes its impact and enhances the sustainability of its interventions. Whether through financial contributions, expertise sharing, infrastructure support, or in-kind donations, these partnerships enable the program to expand its reach and effectiveness. Leveraging collective resources and expertise, the program can address complex health challenges more comprehensively, ensuring that students, families, and communities receive the support they need to thrive.

Holistic Approach to Education: The revitalized school health program advocates for a holistic approach to education that recognizes the interconnectedness of physical, mental, and social well-being with academic success. Prioritizing the comprehensive development of students, the program aims to create learning environments that nurture the whole child (Çalışkan & İzmirli, 2020). Through initiatives that promote physical activity, mental health awareness, social-emotional learning, and healthy lifestyle choices, the program equips students with the skills, knowledge, and resilience they need to succeed both inside and outside the classroom. Embracing a holistic vision of education, schools prepare students to navigate the complexities of the modern world and lead fulfilling, productive lives.

Cultural Sensitivity: Cultural sensitivity is at the core of the Revitalized school health program, acknowledging and respecting the diverse cultural backgrounds of communities in Nigeria. Integrating local beliefs, traditions, and practices into its initiatives, the program ensures that interventions are relevant, accessible, and accepted by the community (Wager, Berriz, Cranmer & Poey, 2023). Through culturally sensitive approaches to health promotion and education, the program builds trust, fosters engagement, and strengthens relationships among stakeholders. Honoring cultural diversity and involving community members in the design and implementation of interventions, the program creates a more inclusive and effective framework for promoting the health and well-being of children and families.

3.2 Challenges of School Health Program in Nigeria

From the discussion so far it was observed that School Health Program in Nigeria faces a lot of crises which need urgent attention and to be addressed properly for appropriate measures. These include:

Poor implementation of National School Health Policy: In 2006 the Federal Republic of Nigeria formulated National School Health Policy to support SHP with adequate and necessary facilities, resources and program to ensure physical and mental health, social well-being, safety and security of school community for better learning outcomes. But the policy was poorly implemented right from Federal, state and local government level, some of the stakeholders of SHP are not discharging their duties properly to the extent that some are not even aware of this policy after a decade of formulation.

Inadequate School Health Facilities: In order to implement SHP successfully, there must be adequate provision of school health facilities. As examined in this paper, it has shown that most of schools in Nigeria especially primary and secondary are suffering from inadequate and lack of health facilities such as school clinic/sickbay, drugs, safe drinking water, waste disposal facilities, safe buildings, sport facilities, recreational facilities, etc.

Inadequate Health Personnel: In the implementation guidelines of National School Health Policy the FME (2006) stated that, School health services should be provided by physicians, dentists, school health nurses, teachers and other appropriate personnel to appraise, protect and promote the health of members of the school community (Abdolkarimy, Zareipour, Mahmoodi, Dashti, Faryabi & Movahed, 2017). In most schools in Nigeria the common health personnel is health master and only few schools with nurse as the overall health officer in the schools. The worst part is that some of the school health masters don't have any health related certificate or training.

Poor Commitments from Stakeholder of School Health Program: There are poor commitments and lack of political will to support the program effectively from the stakeholders of school health program such as school administrators, School Based Management Committee, community, federal and state ministries of education, health, environment, water resources works and related departments in the local government.

Poor Implementation of School Health Education: Despite the importance of school health education/instruction in educating our children in schools and other health related awareness and campaign is dying in Nigerian schools mostly in senior secondary schools. Study by Moore, Timpe, Raspberry, Hertz, Verlenden, J., Spencer, Murray, Lee, Barrios, Tripathi & McConnell, (2024) revealed that in many parts of Nigeria, health instruction in secondary schools was poorly carried out the non-implementation of instructional components of health education curriculum

Resource Constraints: Nigeria's education sector often grapples with resource constraints, impeding the effective implementation of various initiatives. Financial limitations, inadequate infrastructure, and a scarcity of qualified personnel present formidable hurdles. Insufficient funding restricts the capacity to invest in essential resources such as educational materials, technology, and infrastructure maintenance (Anthony, 2023). Additionally, a shortage of qualified teachers and support staff further exacerbates the challenge, hindering efforts to deliver quality education and support student learning outcomes. Addressing resource constraints necessitates strategic resource allocation, innovative financing mechanisms, and partnerships with stakeholders to mobilize additional resources. Furthermore, optimizing existing resources through efficient management practices and prioritizing investments in critical areas can help mitigate the impact of constraints on educational quality and access.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: Nigeria's diverse cultural and linguistic landscape enriches its educational tapestry but also presents unique challenges. With over 250 ethnic groups and more than 500 languages spoken, ensuring inclusivity and addressing the diverse needs of students from various cultural backgrounds is paramount. Effective educational interventions must be culturally sensitive, responsive, and tailored to accommodate linguistic diversity. This entails developing curriculum

materials, instructional approaches, and support services that reflect the cultural contexts and linguistic preferences of students. Moreover, promoting intercultural understanding, fostering respect for diverse perspectives, and creating inclusive learning environments are essential for promoting equitable access and fostering positive educational experiences for all learners.

Overcoming Resistance to Change: Resistance to change is a common barrier encountered in educational reform efforts, hindering the adoption of new practices and initiatives. Whether stemming from institutional inertia, fear of the unknown, or vested interests, overcoming resistance to change requires strategic leadership, effective communication, and stakeholder engagement. Educators, administrators, policymakers, and community members must be actively involved in the change process, understanding the rationale behind proposed reforms and participating in decision-making processes (Andrews, Birrell, Chapman, Teesson, Newton, Allsop, McBride, Hides, Andrews, Olsen & Mewton, 2023). Building a shared vision for change, articulating the benefits of proposed reforms, and addressing concerns and misconceptions through transparent communication are essential strategies for garnering support and buy-in. Additionally, providing opportunities for professional development, capacity-building, and continuous feedback can empower stakeholders to embrace change, adapt to new practices, and contribute to successful implementation efforts.

3.3 Evaluation and Measurement in Revitalizing School Health Programs

Successful implementation of school health programs requires strategic planning and collaboration among diverse stakeholders. Clear goals and objectives must be established, reflecting the unique needs and priorities of students and the community. Collaborative decision-making processes ensure that programs are tailored to meet the diverse needs of students and families. Additionally, cultural responsiveness is paramount, as it fosters inclusivity and equity by recognizing and respecting cultural diversity (Andrews, Birrell, Chapman, Teesson, Newton, Allsop, McBride, Hides, Andrews, Olsen & Mewton, 2023).

Continuous evaluation and improvement mechanisms enable schools to assess the effectiveness of their programs and make necessary adjustments to enhance outcomes over time. Evaluation and measurement are crucial components of revitalizing school health programs to ensure effectiveness and monitor progress towards desired outcomes. As school health programs seek to strengthen relationships between schools, homes, and communities, robust evaluation mechanisms are essential for assessing program effectiveness and monitoring progress over time (Olaoye, Osie-Efietie, Ogunsanmi, Mustapha, Asekun-Olarinmoye & Atulomah, 2024).

Assessing Program Effectiveness: Evaluation of school health programs involves assessing various components to determine their impact on the overall health and well-being of students, families, and communities. This includes examining the implementation fidelity, reach, and quality of program activities, as well as their outcomes and impact on target populations. For example, evaluations may assess the extent to which health education curriculum is implemented as intended, the level of participation from students and families in health-promoting activities, and changes in health-related knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.

To effectively assess program effectiveness, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods is often employed. Quantitative measures may include surveys, assessments, and standardized tests to measure changes in health outcomes, academic performance, and other relevant indicators. Qualitative methods, such as focus groups, interviews, and case studies, provide insights into participants' experiences, perceptions, and the contextual factors influencing program outcomes. For instance, a study by Ademokun, Osungbade & Obembe (2014) evaluated the effectiveness of a school-based health education program in improving students' nutrition knowledge and dietary behaviors in a rural area of China. The researchers utilized pre- and post-intervention surveys to assess changes in students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to nutrition, as well as qualitative interviews to explore participants' perceptions of the program's impact.

Monitoring Progress and Outcomes: Monitoring progress and outcomes are essential for tracking the implementation of school health programs and assessing their impact over time. This involves regularly collecting data on program activities, outputs, and outcomes to identify strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement. Monitoring data can inform decision-making, resource allocation, and ongoing program adjustments to optimize effectiveness and sustainability.

For example, monitoring data may include attendance records for health education sessions, participation rates in physical activity programs, utilization of school health services, and changes in health-related behaviors or outcomes among students and families. By systematically tracking these indicators, program stakeholders can identify trends, measure progress towards goals, and make informed decisions about program priorities and strategies.

In a study by Owolabi, Ayoade, Adesola and Adeniyi (2024), the authors conducted a process evaluation of a school-based mental health program aimed at promoting resilience and well-being among students. Through ongoing monitoring of program activities, implementation challenges, and participant feedback, the researchers identified opportunities to enhance program delivery, tailor interventions to meet the needs of diverse populations, and strengthen partnerships with community resources.

3.4 Future Directions and Recommendations for Revitalizing School Health Programs

An effective school health program comprises various interconnected components aimed at addressing the multifaceted needs of students. Health education serves as a cornerstone, providing students with essential knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about their health. Concurrently, initiatives promoting physical activity and nutrition play pivotal roles in fostering healthy lifestyles and preventing chronic diseases (Smith, Sarki, Onukwughu & Magadi, 2020). Moreover, access to mental health support services ensures that students' emotional and psychological needs are adequately addressed within the school setting. Collectively, these components create a comprehensive framework that supports students' overall well-being and academic achievement.

As school health programs continue to evolve, it is crucial to consider future directions and recommendations to ensure their effectiveness, relevance, and long-term sustainability. Addressing emerging health issues and implementing strategies for long-term sustainability are key priorities for advancing school health initiatives.

Addressing Emerging Health Issues: In light of evolving health trends and emerging challenges, school health programs must remain adaptive and responsive to address current and future health issues effectively. This includes addressing emerging health threats such as infectious diseases, mental health concerns, substance abuse, and lifestyle-related conditions like obesity and sedentary behavior. By staying informed about the latest research and epidemiological data, school health programs can tailor interventions to address prevalent health issues among students and communities (Obembe, Osungbade & Ademokun, 2016).

For example, integrating mental health education and support services into school health programs can help address the growing prevalence of mental health disorders among youth. Additionally, promoting healthy lifestyle behaviors, such as physical activity and nutritious eating, can mitigate the risk of chronic diseases and promote overall well-being among students. Moreover, incorporating strategies for addressing social determinants of health, such as poverty, inequity, and access to healthcare, can help address underlying factors contributing to health disparities and inequities among students and communities (Anazia, 2021). By adopting a comprehensive approach that addresses both individual and systemic factors, school health programs can better meet the evolving health needs of diverse populations.

Long-Term Sustainability Strategies: Ensuring the long-term sustainability of school health programs requires strategic planning, resource mobilization, and stakeholder engagement. Sustainable programs are those that can effectively maintain their impact and relevance over time,

even in the face of changing circumstances and challenges. To promote sustainability, school health programs can consider the following strategies:

1. **Partnerships and Collaboration:** Forge partnerships with government agencies, non-profit organizations, healthcare providers, businesses, and community stakeholders to leverage resources, expertise, and support for program initiatives. Collaborative efforts can enhance program reach, effectiveness, and sustainability by pooling resources and sharing responsibilities.
2. **Capacity Building:** Invest in training and professional development opportunities for educators, health professionals, and community members involved in implementing school health programs. Building capacity among program staff and stakeholders can enhance their skills, knowledge, and confidence in delivering effective health interventions and support services.
3. **Policy Advocacy:** Advocate for policies and regulations that support the integration and sustainability of school health programs within educational systems. This may include advocating for increased funding, mandates for health education curriculum, and supportive environments for physical activity and nutrition within school settings.
4. **Community Engagement:** Engage students, families, and community members in program planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. By involving stakeholders in decision-making and fostering a sense of ownership and investment in program outcomes, school health programs can enhance community support and sustainability.
5. **Evaluation and Continuous Improvement:** Implement robust evaluation mechanisms to monitor program effectiveness, identify areas for improvement, and track progress towards goals over time. By regularly assessing program outcomes and soliciting feedback from stakeholders, programs can adapt and refine their strategies to better meet evolving needs and challenges.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the revitalization of school health programs offers a promising pathway to strengthen the interconnectedness between schools, homes, and communities in Nigeria. Prioritizing holistic approaches, improved communication, enhanced parental involvement, community engagement, comprehensive health education, support for vulnerable students, resource mobilization, a holistic approach to education, and cultural sensitivity can collectively contribute to nurturing a harmonious ecosystem where students' well-being takes precedence. Despite facing challenges such as poor policy implementation, inadequate facilities and personnel, and resource constraints, proactive measures can be taken to address these issues and ensure the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of school health initiatives. Through collaborative efforts and leveraging partnerships, stakeholders can foster supportive environments conducive to the holistic development of every child. Ultimately, revitalized school health programs have the potential to not only enhance educational outcomes but also promote the health and well-being of future generations, laying a solid foundation for a healthier, more prosperous society in Nigeria.

Based on the conclusion drawn from this paper to improve School Health Program in Nigeria for better learning outcomes, effective school administration and to actualize educational goals and objectives, the paper submits the following recommendations:

1. In the process of implementing SHP school administrators, School Based Management Committee, and other stakeholders should ensure that they stick to implementation guidelines as specified by the National School Health policy.
2. School clinic/sickbay should be established in all schools with adequate drugs. Adequate and appropriate health facilities, such as first aid box and referral services should be made available in all schools.
3. Physicians, Dentists, Nurses, and other health personnel should be provided in all schools and only health personnel should be assigned as a school health master.

4. School administrators, School Based Management Committee, Ministries of Health, Education, Environment, Water Resources etc. should intensify their efforts in provision and maintenance of School Health Programme.
5. School Health Education should be maintained and implemented in all schools from primary to secondary schools levels Health Instruction should be included in senior secondary schools curriculum.
6. Adequate funding should be provided to the programme. In doing so school administrators and School Based Management Committee should liaise with community, local government, state and federal ministries and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

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