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Investigating the factors responsible for fallen standard of education in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background: Facilities and equipment foster learning and achievement of educational goals. Adequate facilities and equipment in schools provide a condition of maximum concentration that students require for learning. But it seems that there is dearth of these facilities and equipment in the schools and that might account for the fallen standard of education in most part of the Nigeria. Objective: The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors responsible for fallen standard of education in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria Methodology: Five research questions and one null hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. Questionnaires consisting 26 items was designed and administered to a sample of 520 respondents (260 teachers and 260 parents). Means and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the null hypothesis. Results: The study found out that it was the opinion of secondary school teachers and parents that facilities such as classrooms, laboratory facilities, instructional materials are insufficient while libraries, urinals, toilets, incinerators and playground facilities are lacked in the secondary schools in Nsukka LGA, hence insufficiency and lack of facilities constitute a factor for the fallen standard of education in the area. It is also the opinion of secondary school teachers and parents that poor supervision, lack of guidance and counselling services, lack of interest in, and commitment to studies, and believe that the end justifies the means, and parents' negative attitudes constitutes the factors for the fallen standard of education in secondary schools in Nsukka LGA. There is no significant difference between the opinion of teachers and parents with regard to the factors responsible for the fallen standard of education in secondary schools in Nsukka LGA. Conclusion: The researchers concluded that adequate provision of facilities will help teachers' activities and keep the students focused on their primary assignment. The home and the school are two social institutions that have great influence on the child, the home, particularly parents should be concerned about the activities of their children in the school and how they are fairing. Rebuilding the fallen standard of education is a collective onus and not that of the government alone. All hands should therefore be on deck to raise the standard of education.

INTRODUCTION

Education is generally perceived to be the process of discipline through consistent and meaningful training and study in the development and acquisition of skills and knowledge (Ede and Ogbu, 2002). Kneller in Mama

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(1994) defined education as, “the process by which any society through schools, colleges, universities and other institutions, deliberately transmits its cultural heritage that is, its accumulated knowledge, value, skills from one generation to another. Cronin in Mama sees education as a deliberate systematic and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, acquire knowledge, values, attitudes, skills and sensibilities. Ukeje (1978) believed that, the process by which people are acclimatized to the culture in which they are born in order that they may advance it is education.

From the above views, education could be referred to as the means of imparting knowledge in people and helping them to develop their skills for their own as well as societal good. Education can be formal or informal and both are responsible for the formation of individual in the society. Informal Education is that which begins from the home in which case the individual child through observation and imitation, consciously and unconsciously learns certain basic ways of life, skills, habits and even language as is obtainable within her immediate environment or society. Nwabuisi (1992) sees informal education as the first step of learning process. Conversely, formal education is that which the individual gets from organised schools and institutions with curricula and specific ends in view,, prominent among which are the improvement of the individual’s intellectual, moral, religious as well as her social dispositions.

Modern education dates back to 24 September, 1842 with the arrival at Badagry of the Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman and Mr. and Mrs. Williams de Graft of the Wesleyan Missionary Society (Fafunwa, 1974; Ogbuagu, 2000). It was not until 1859 that the first post-primary school was established. Thereafter, there was gradual spread of secondary schools.

The National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) defined secondary education as the education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage. The broad goals of secondary education include preparing the individual for: useful living within the society and higher education. In specific term, secondary education shall: provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religion or ethnic background; offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles; provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades; develop and improve Nigerian Languages, art and culture in the context of world’s cultural heritage; inspire students with a desire for self improvement and achievement of excellence; foster National Unity with emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity; raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals and live as good citizens; and provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.

According to Ogbonnaya (2003), secondary education provides opportunities for primary school leavers to acquire more knowledge and develop skills which prepare them to live effectively. It helps in developing potentials and cultural talents of children. It also helps to produce good citizens whose greatest pride is in their contribution to the happiness and joy of others and of themselves. In order to achieve the goals of secondary education, certain factors are required. Among the factors are: facilities, supervision, guidance and counselling, students’ attitude to their studies as well as parents’ attitude to their children’s studies.

Facilities and equipment foster learning and achievement of educational goals. According to Ani in Ndu, Ocho and Okeke (1997), facilities and equipment play an important role in the maintenance and promotion of teaching and learning in the school system. Aliyu (2003) reports that adequate facilities in schools provide a condition of maximum concentration that students require for learning. In order to achieve the goals of secondary education, supervision is also important to facilitate learning.

Supervision is a process of bringing about improvement in instruction by working with people who work with students. Mgbodile in Nwoke (1997) sees the need for supervision of instruction as lying in the need to accomplish organisational goals. Not only facilities and supervision are needed in order to achieve and facilitate learning but also guidance and counselling. Guidance and counselling is an integral service that ought to be part and parcel of the educational process (Okeke, 2003). Oshimeje (1997) observed that the importance of Guidance counselling with regard to facilitating learning includes: assisting each individual student to understand and accept himself as an individual and assisting in providing basic information, which will help secondary school students to be better equipped cognitively and psychologically in tackling important issues in their lives.

Another factor necessary for the achievement of educational goals is the attitude of students to their schooling or studies. According to Osuji (2004), the students are expected to study hard in order to pass both external and internal examinations. Attitude of parents to their children’s education is also another factor necessary for the achievement of educational goals. Parents are expected to pay the school fees of their wards in time, provide them with the necessary text books and other materials for meaningful teaching learning process (Ejionueme, 2004). Eneastor (1998) observed that, some parents hardly supervise their children’s work; this would negatively influence the students’ academic excellence in achieving the goals of education

In spite of the importance of secondary education, its standard is observed to be falling. Dada (2004) noted that this is most manifest in the quality of school leavers produced by schools today. Madu (2004) observed that

far well over two decades our educational standard has been lying prostrate. The Chief Examiners Reports for Nigeria in which Nsukka Local Government Area is included showed that the standard of performance of students in WAEC (WAEC, 1998; 2000) had been low. This was evident in many of the subjects such as English Language, Literature in English, Geography, Christian Religious Knowledge, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, General Mathematics, Commerce, Accounts, Economics, Government and Arts. In the same report, WAEC (1997) observed that, generally the overall performance of candidates did not show any remarkable improvement over those of the previous years. It was reported that candidates performed below expectation in English Language History, Geography, and Government. The Chief Examiners equally expressed concern at the deteriorating performance trend of candidates in the sciences especially in Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics. A student of SS 1 in Nsukka Local Government Area was asked the answer to $6 + 0$. He said 9! Many secondary school leavers in Nsukka Local Government Area can neither express themselves in English nor spell a simple word.

The observed falling standard of education in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area puts one in doubt as to whether the factors mentioned above are brought into play in teaching and learning in the area. If not, could that be responsible for the falling standard of education? This is the motive for this study to find out factors responsible for the fallen standard of education in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

- i. In what ways do facilities constitute a factor for the fallen standard of education?
- ii. In what ways does supervision constitute a factor for the fallen standard for education?
- iii. How do Guidance and Counselling services constitute a factor to the fallen standard of education?
- iv. How do students' attitudes to studies/schooling constitute a factor for the fallen standard of education?
- v. In what ways do parents attitudes to their children's schooling/studies constitute a factor for the fallen standard of education?

Hypothesis

One null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study and was tested at 0.5 level of significance.

Ho: There will be no significant difference between the mean ratings of parents and teachers on the factors responsible for the fallen standard of education in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area.

1. Methodology:

Design of the Study: The design for this study was descriptive survey.

Area of the Study: The study was carried out in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. Nsukka Local Government Area is made up of Nsukka Central, Nsukka East, and Nsukka West development centres.

Population of the Study: The population of the study comprised all the twenty-five thousand seven hundred and eighty-three parents and one thousand and sixteen teachers in the twenty-six public secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area.

Sample and Sampling Technique: The sample of the study was five hundred and twenty (520) respondents (260 teachers and 260 parents) purposively selected from the population. Ten teachers including the principals and ten parents were purposively selected from each of the twenty-six secondary schools in the area of the study.

Instrument for Data Collection: Questionnaire was used to collect data for this study. The questionnaire was titled "Questionnaire for parents and teachers on the factors responsible for fallen standard of education in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area". It comprised 26 items built in five clusters A, B, C, D and E on a four - point scale of Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD) rated 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Validation of the Instrument: The instrument for data collection was validated by two experts, one in Measurement and Evaluation and one in Educational Administration and Planning.

Reliability of the Instrument: The reliability of the instrument was determined by a test-retest exercise with a purposive sample of ten parents and ten teachers drawn from Boys' High School, Orba. A two-week gap was given between the first rating and the retest. Scores from the two administration of the test were correlated using Pearson's Product Correlation formula to obtain a coefficient of the reliability of 0.76 which is indicative that the instrument is reliable.

Method of Data Collection: The researchers used three trained research assistants to administer the questionnaire. The direct delivery and retrieval method was applied in the administration of the questionnaire on the respondents.

Method of Data Analysis: Mean scores and Standard Deviation were used to analyse the data. The t-test statistic was used to test the null hypothesis.

2. Results:

Research Question One:

In what ways do facilities constitute a factor for the fallen standard of education?

Table 1: Mean ratings of teachers and parents on ways facilities contribute to the fallen standard of education.

S/N	Item	Teachers			Parents		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	There are enough classrooms to accommodate all the students.	1.84	0.76	SD	2.06	0.90	D
2.	There are enough seats and desks for students to sit and write on.	1.79	0.79	SD	2.55	1.07	A
3.	The school has a well equipped library.	2.13	0.99	D	2.12	1.02	D
4.	There are adequate laboratory facilities for practicals.	1.96	0.96	SD	2.01	0.98	D
5.	There are adequate instructional materials.	2.11	0.59	D	1.92	0.89	SD
6.	There are decent urinals and toilets for students.	1.81	0.89	SD	2.18	1.04	D
7.	There are incinerators in the school.	1.42	0.49	SD	1.66	0.56	SD
8.	There are playgrounds equipped with its facilities.	1.92	0.94	SD	2.10	0.76	D
	Cluster mean and SD	1.87	0.80	SD	2.08	0.90	D

Table 1 shows that all the items except (item 2) requiring parents opinion on availability of seats and desks, have mean scores below the cut-off mark of 2.50 with cluster means of 1.87 and SD of 0.80 (for teachers) and 2.08 of means with SD of 0.90 (for parents). This implies that inadequate facilities constitute a factor for the fallen standard of education.

Research Question Two:

In what ways does supervision constitute a factor for the fallen standard of education in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area?

Table 2: Mean ratings of teachers and parents on how supervision contributes to the fallen standard of education in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area.

S/N	Item	Teachers			Parents		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Lack of regular supervision of schools contributes to the fallen standard of education.	3.05	0.91	SA	1.64	0.98	SD
2.	Absence of supervision gives room for lousiness on the part of teachers.	3.05	0.91	SA	2.95	0.94	A
3.	Teachers are usually happy after supervision	1.9	0.91	SD	2.19	1.00	D
4.	The supervisors send reports to schools visited.	1.9	0.91	SD	2.22	1.05	D
	Cluster mean and SD	2.48	0.91	D	2.25	0.99	D

Table 2 shows that the teachers responded positively to only items 1 and 2 (3.05 with SD of 0.91 and 3.05 with SD of 0.91 respectively), and negatively to items 3 and 4 (1.91 with SD of 0.91 and 1.9 with SD of 0.91 respectively) while parents responded positively only to items 1, 3, 4 (1.64 with SD of 0.98, 2.19 with SD of 1.00 and 2.22 with SD of 1.05 respectively). This is an indication of lack of supervision/reports implying the fallen standard of education in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area.

Research Question Three:

How does absence of Guidance and Counselling service contribute to the fallen standard of education in Nsukka Local Government Area?

Table 3: Mean ratings of teachers and parents on how lack of Guidance and Counselling services contributes to the fallen standard of education in Nsukka Local Government Area.

S/N	Item	Teachers			Parents		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	The schools' counsellors organise career day and conference for students.	1.4	0.49	SD	1.61	0.55	SD
2.	Students are referred to the schools' counsellors when the need arises.	1.4	0.49	SD	1.62	0.55	SD
3.	Students are educated on the need and importance of Guidance and Counselling services.	1.4	0.49	SD	1.62	0.55	SD
4.	Students are given adequate education and socio-personal information.	1.43	0.54	SD	1.61	0.58	D
5.	Orientation courses are organised for new students by the school counsellors.	2.50	1.10	A	2.50	1.11	A
	Cluster mean and SD	1.63	0.62	SD	1.79	0.67	SD

From the data presented above, the respondents indicated that Guidance and Counselling services are lacking in the schools. In their responses to items 1, 2, 3, and 4, the data showed teachers with mean and SD of 1.4 and 0.49, 1.4 and 0.49, 1.4 and 0.49 and 1.43 and 0.54 respectively; and parents with mean and SD of 1.61 and 0.55, 1.62 and 0.55, 1.62 and 0.55 and 1.61 and 0.58 respectively. However, item 5 received positive responses from both teachers and parents as they agreed that orientation courses are organised for new students by the school counsellors. By implication, lack of Guidance and Counselling Services constitute a factor for the fallen standard of education in Nsukka Local Government Area Secondary Schools.

Research Question Four:

How do students' attitudes to studies/schooling constitute a factor for the fallen standard of education?

Table 5: Mean ratings of teachers and parents on how students' attitude to studies contributes to the fallen standard of education.

S/N	Item	Teachers			Parents		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Some students are not interested in studies, so they disturb others.	3.10	0.87	SA	2.97	0.96	A
2.	Students' lack of commitment to studies	3.06	0.91	SA	2.83	1.02	A
3.	Influence of vogue in fashion on students affect academic work	3.10	0.87	SA	2.99	0.92	A
4.	The wrong impression that what matters is what is achieved not the means affects students' studies.	3.13	0.87	SA	2.98	0.92	A
	Cluster mean and SD	3.10	0.87	SA	2.94	0.96	A

From the data presented in the above table, the respondents, teachers and parents, overwhelmingly agreed that students' poor attitude to studies contribute to the decline in the standard of education. Their mean score for the items in this cluster range from 2.83 to 3.13 and the cluster mean are 3.10, SD 0.87 (for teachers) and 2.94, SD 0.96 (for parents).

Research Question Five:

In what ways do parents' attitudes to their children's schooling/studies constitute a factor for the fallen standard of education in Nsukka Local Government Area?

Table 5: Mean ratings of teachers and parents on how parents' attitude to their children's schooling/studies contribute to the fallen standard of education.

S/N	Item	Teachers			Parents		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Most parents do not care about the performance of their wards at school.	2.91	1.05	A	2.73	1.00	A
2.	Some parents protest when their children are punished in the school.						

		3.08	0.92	SA	2.72	1.05	A
3.	Some parents encourage and or sponsor their children to cheat during examinations.	3.05	0.90	SA	2.82	1.01	A
4.	some parents do not pay their ward's fees and levies in time leading to their children/wards being sent away from school.	2.96	0.93	A	2.80	1.03	A
5.	Some parents always occupy their wards with many activities at home.	3.05	0.91	SA	2.78	1.00	A
	Cluster mean and SD	3.01	0.94	SA	2.72	1.02	A

From table 5, the mean scores of the teachers and parents regarding how parents' attitude to their children's schooling/studies contribute to the decline in the standard of performance in our secondary schools range from 2.73 to 3.08 with cluster mean of 3.01, SD 0.94 (for teachers) and 2.72, SD 1.02 (for parents). This is indicative of the respondents' strong opinion that parents' attitude to their children's schooling/studies contribute to the decline in the standard of performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area.

Null Hypothesis:

There will be no significant difference between the mean ratings of parents and teachers on the factors responsible for the fallen standard of education.

Table 6: T-test analysis of the difference between the mean scores of teachers and parents on factors responsible for the fallen standard of education in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area

Variables	\bar{X}	SD	N	Df	Prob-Level	Cal. t value	Crit. t-value	Decision
Factors responsible for fallen standard of education.								
Teachers	2.35	0.82	260		0.05			
Parents	2.31	0.90	260	518		0.53	1.96	Not significant

As can be seen in Table 6, the calculated t-value at 518 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance is 0.53. Since the calculated value of 0.53 is less than the critical table value of 1.96, the null hypothesis is accepted. This is to say that there is no significant difference between the opinions of the teachers and those of the parents regarding the factors that contribute to fallen standard of education in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area.

Discussion:

From the analysis of the data in table1, in the opinion of the teachers and parents, there are not enough classrooms to accommodate the students for serious academic works, the schools are lacking equipped libraries and laboratories for practical, there are no incinerators and playing grounds with facilities. There is however, a noticeable disagreement between the teachers and parents on adequacy of seats and desks in the school. While teachers strongly agreed that seats and desks are lacking, the parents did not consider that seats and desks are insufficient. The opinions of parents are understandable since they provide chairs and lockers for their wards. Some of the seats and desks provided might have been damaged or stolen. The general lack of facilities found out is in line with views of Godwin (2004), Abdulwaheed (2004), Nebo (2004) and Kamba (1988) who observed that basic facilities like laboratories, libraries, sports facilities among others are grossly inadequate. In the same view, Ismaila (1995) pointed out that children are taught in makeshift classrooms without proper facilities. Meanwhile, Aliyu (2003) reported that adequate facilities in schools provide a condition of maximum concentration that students required for learning. Thus, lack of facilities therefore constitutes a factor for the fallen standard of education.

The analysis of the data in table 2 shows according to teachers that lack of regular supervision constitutes a factor for the fallen standard of education. Teachers' responses are taken more seriously because they are the ones supervised for enhancement of quality of work not parents. They therefore understand better what supervision means. According to the respondents, absence of supervision gives room for lousiness on the part of teachers, teachers are usually sad after the supervision; supervisors never send reports to schools visited. The findings agree with the views of Danjuma (1995) who stated clearly that the measures of quality control in education are: (1) Internal control or principal's supervisory control and (2) External control of inspector's supervisory control. He further maintained that both are complementary which enhance high standard of education and reduce the standard when they are lacking. According to Ogunsaju (1983:1), enlightened parents today are overburdened with many intriguing and curious questions about the educational system. Such questions include: What is the cause of the falling standard in our education? In order to answer this we cannot but agree with Nwaogu (1980:10) that, "an effective supervision programme is therefore, needed in every school and all levels of educational institutions to co-ordinate all teaching and learning reports". This is in line with

Okonkwo (1998), who opines that when adequate supervision is carried out, it will then pave way for better performance of the school system.

For research question three, the teachers and parents agreed that lack of Guidance and Counselling services contribute to the fallen standard of education. In the opinion of the parents and the teachers, no career day/conferences is organised for students, the students are not referred to schools' counsellors when need arises, they are not being educated on the role of and need for counsellors, they are not being given socio-personal information. Their views are shared with Ike (1996) who succinctly said that the absence of counselling services make many students to blunder into disciplines for which they have no competence, interest or patience. This contributes to decline in our education standard. Before the introduction of Guidance and Counselling in educational system of secondary schools academic standard of students has been characterised by lack of direction, poor understanding of themselves, and sometimes the students were misguided by inexperienced personnel (Esomonu 1998).

Both the teachers and parents however agreed that orientation courses are organised for new students by the schools' counsellors. Oshimeje (1997) outlined the benefits of Guidance and Counselling as follows: making it possible for the individual student to become what he wants and know what to do with regard to his academic standard; and assisting the secondary school students to assess properly their moral and academic strength. This can be done through personal interviews, test and information bulletin board. With these information and news, Guidance Counsellors can significantly enhance appropriate academic up bringing in the secondary schools.

From the analysis of the data presented in table 4, the results indicated that for the teachers and parents, the attitudes of students to studies/schooling contribute to the fallen standard of education. Such attitudes according to them include lack of interest which makes them waste their time and disturb others, psychedelic vogue in fashion, wrong impression that the end justifies the means, students' lack of commitment to their studies. This supports the early view of Mama (1994) that students waste away their time either inside or outside the school or campus playing their cassette or organising and attending parties, etc. instead of bending down to study.

The analysis of the data in table 5 indicates that there is agreement between opinions of the teachers and those of the parents on how parents' attitude to their children's schooling/studies which include indifference to the performance of their wards at school, protestation when their children are punished in the school, encouraging and or sponsoring their children in examination malpractices, late payment of fees and levies leading to their children/wards being sent away from school, occupying their wards with many activities at home contribute to the fallen standard of education. The findings are in agreement with the view of Nwoke (1997:18) who asserts that, unfailingly parental attitudes would significantly, positively or negatively, influence the students' whole life, personality development, academic excellence, ambition and motivation to achieve a set goal or whatever makes a man. Similar findings (Eneasator, 1998) observed that, some parents hardly supervise their children's work, others neglect their responsibilities to their wards/children by failing to provide them with basic requirements and often failing to pay their fees in time. Again, some parents use their influential position to thwart disciplinary measures by teachers including principals especially when they affect their children or wards.

Conclusion:

Without effective supervision of schools, teachers will not be serious with their work. But with adequate supervision of schools, the standard of both instructional method and the school in general will be improved. Adequate provision of facilities will help teachers' activities and keep the students focused on their primary assignment. The home and the school are two social institutions that have great influence on the child, the home, particularly parents should be concerned about the activities of their children in the school and how they are fairing. Rebuilding the fallen standard of education is a collective onus and not that of the government alone. All hands should therefore be on deck to raise the standard of education. The government should set up a task force committee of experienced Nigerians to make immediate assessment of the facilities, Guidance and Counselling services and supervision problems and quickly arrive at how to get instant result to improve the situation. A committee should be set up by NGOs for a complete re-orientation and change of attitude to education among our school children, parents and teachers. There should be supply of necessary curriculum materials such as science equipment and instructional media by the government through school administrators. Monitoring teams should be instituted to ensure regular supervision of teachers as a means of achieving improved education standard.

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