

Effect of Inadequate School Plant on Academic Performance of Nigerian Secondary School Students

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Abstract—The Nigerian education system is grappling with a plethora of problems which seem to defy solution over the years, chief among such problems is gross inadequacy in quality of facilities available to students in Nigerian secondary schools, and the haphazard citing of such schools occasionally in places that are not easily accessible or even places that are susceptible to ambient noise interference. The foregoing situation has had its backlash effects on academic performance of students as evidenced by dwindling academic performance. It has also culminated in an emerging trend of parental [reference for schools, however these private schools and most parents can hardly afford the extravagant fees they charge. Therefore the thrust of this paper is to identify causes of inadequate school plant in Nigerian secondary schools proffer solution such as: increased government subvention payable to schools; renovation of all school buildings by government; and provision of adequate IT facilities among other government interventions.

Keywords— School Plant, Performance, Secondary Schools, Nigeria, Facilities.

I. INTRODUCTION

IN recent times stakeholders in the Nigerian education system have been agitated as a result of persistent and alarming slide being experienced in the Nigerian Education system. The situation has worsened in spite to effort by successive governments which have sought to revamp the glory of the Nigerian Education system to no avail. Multifarious problems ranging from mismanagement of allocated resources to declining standard of education are being experienced (Ajayi, 1999). The foregoing result in dwindling performance of students in external examinations such as the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) organized by West African Examination Council (WAEC) as posited by Dada (1987), Enacsator (1995), Ajayi 1999 and Akinbuairo and Joshua (2004).

Okafor, Ugbe, Iheagwam and Betiang (2003) opines that the avalanche of problems faced in the education system culminate in falling standards and loss of confidence in the Nigerian education system. Public outcry about the debilitated state of Nigerian education has yielded little or no result. Government and its education policy making apparatus seem to be slap happy as evidenced by shoddy handling of the economy,

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without much result to show for its effort at tackling a plethora of problems. Political parties also cash in on the heightened public concern for improvement in the educational system, however they only pay lip service to this urgent situation.

Adebayo (2009) Aptly captured the level of decline in Nigerian education system by stating that “a casual visit to any public school in Nigeria would reveal the extent to which these educational institutions have decayed”. Educational facilities at all levels are in a terrible shape; schools are littered with battered structures; worn out equipment (where they are available at all); overcrowded classrooms; inadequate manpower in quantity and quality; instability in the academic calendar owing to strikes; very low teacher (staff) morale due to poor remuneration and working conditions”. Therefore it is pertinent to redress the deplorable situation of the educational system in order to shore up academic standards. A veritable means of achieving this feat is to look into the situation of crumbling infrastructures.

Similarly, Alimi, Ehinola and Alabi (2012) opine that in South-West Nigeria secondary schools, instructional space such as classrooms, libraries, technical workshops and laboratories are structurally defective, that is, classrooms are not spacious enough”. The foregoing trend definitely portends grave consequences for Nigeria secondary school system. A situation in which facilities are grossly inadequate would likely lead to mass failure in external examinations. The implication for instance is that where students lack necessary learning experiences due to inadequately of facilities, the achievement of pre-specified objectives of the curriculum becomes unattainable and leads inevitably to failure of students when they are assessed based on objectives of the curriculum that were not achieved during teaching/learning evaluation of students.

The pathetic situation in Nigeria schools is worsened by the fact that enrolment in schools increase without commensurate expansion of school or provision of adequate facilities in schools. (Asiyai, 2012). Most Nigerian public schools have been in existence for a relatively long period with the same limited classrooms, open space, library, laboratory etc. Such schools have witnessed little or no renovation over time, while virtually nothing is done to expand the size of facilities in such schools.

That school plant occupies a premium place among factors

which impinge on students achievement is an understatement. In fact the quality of teaching and learning in schools, which is also a determinant of students' performance, is contingent upon adequacy of school plant (Asiyai, 2012; Odufowokan, 2011).

School plants are made up of the indispensable systems and structures required by any viable educational institution to function effectively and achieve the objectives for which it was established in the first instance (Alimi, Ehinola and Alabi, 2012). They are facilities which physically and spatially enable teaching and learning and by extension help in producing desirable results as evidenced by good academic performance of products of an education.

II. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL PLANT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS

Numerous studies have catalogued the profound effect of school plant on academic performance of students. There has been an ambivalence of such opinions, in that, while some opinions favoured the predisposition that little or no effect of school facilities impact in any way on academic achievement of students, yet other studies such as Philips (1997) have attributed to academic achievement to other factors school as school age.

Hanushek (1981) studied funding of schools and achievement and reached a conclusion that there is little connection between expenditures and achievement by students. He acknowledged variation in per pupil expenditure in different places, however no conclusive evidence was discovered by him to suggest that higher expenditures yield better student achievement, in addition he was specific that increased educational spending would not necessarily yield desirable result where the student fails to make prudent use of available resources. On the contrary, Hanushek opines that such factors like teacher-pupil ratio, teacher education, teacher salary and teacher experience account for academic achievement by students.

However, there exists a prevalence of opinions on the strong connection between adequate school plant and academic achievement of students. Adequate school plant is a sine qua non for higher grades, punctuality, higher attendance, scholastic competence, low disruption of school activities, fewer suspension rate of students, timely progression of students through grades, improved self esteem and self concept by students, reduction of students' anxiety, depression and loneliness as well as reduced substance abuse (Scales & Leffert, 1999). School plant have consistently been shown to positively affect the standard and quality of education (Ojedele, 2000).

III. CAUSES OF INADEQUATE SCHOOL PLANT

Several factors contribute towards the ugly situation of inadequate school plant in a Nigerian secondary schools. These include

A. Funding

Dearth of funds is a major constraint to provision of adequate school facilities. This has led to a devastatingly low level of provision of adequate physical facilities in Nigerian schools. Even when funds are allocated to education, they are often diverted (Hanson, 1992) and not spent on building infrastructure improvements.

B. Deferred Maintenance

A poor maintenance culture also accounts for the deplorable situation of schools in Nigeria. Government and its parastatals usually wait for too long when physical facilities would have deteriorated beyond repairs before they attempts any form of intervention in schools.

Onwuamanam (2005) noted that inadequacy of infrastructural facilities and lack of maintenance for available ones were major debacles of the Nigerian educational system.

C. 3. Built

In Obsolescence of Schools:- The high level of corruption ravaging the Nigerian society does not spare the education system. It is painful that educational administrators and political office holders occasionally connive with contractors and condone shoddy work in order to receive kickback from contractors. This leads to decay in school facilities.

D. Politicization of Education

Most political parties and candidates use education and provision of educational facilities as baits to woo prospective voters. However after winning election into public office, they readily forget their manifestoes.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The place of school plant in an effective educational system cannot be over-emphasized. Adequacy of school plant would enhance effective teaching and learning whereas, its inadequacy culminates inevitably in failure of teachers and students alike to attain pre-specified aims and objectives of education (Ajayi, 1999).

In order to ensure that school plants are provided and maintained at an optimal level, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. Nigerian government should endeavour to provide adequate funds for provision and maintenance of school facilities
2. Regular renovation of school facilities should be undertaken in order to prevent complete destruction of such facilities, which eventually costs more to replace.
3. Students and teachers should imbibe good maintenance culture to ensure that school facilities last longer and serve their purposes optimally
4. Projects for school facilities should be properly monitored in order to ensure that high standards are maintained in the construction and supply of school facilities. This would ensure that funds are prudently used on school plant which last longer and needs less maintenance and depreciation

costs.

5. Government should encourage private sector participation in the provision of education services through various incentive measures such as favourable tax regime for investors in the education sector.

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