



NIGERIA EDUCATION

In The 21st Century

Edited by

J. A. EKONG (Ph. D)

THERESA F. EKANEM (MRS)

DAVID E. EDDIE

ii

© School of Education 2000

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any retrieval system, without permission from the publisher.

ISBN: 998 - 35238 - 8 - 0

Published by
Afahaide & Bros. Printing & Publishing

Computer Typesetting
P & P Educational Consult, Uyo

Printed by
MONGO PRINTERS
83, Dominic Utuk Avenue
Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS' WASTAGE IN NIGERIA. IMPLICATION FOR 21ST CENTURY.

BY

INIJOBONG E. NKANG(MRS)

Educational Foundations Dept. C. O. E. Afaha Nsit

ABSTRACT

The crucial role of Primary Education in National Development has long been recognised in Nigeria. What has tended to distort the efficiency of Primary Education supply is the recurrent problem of wastage.

This paper explores the dynamics of wastage with particular emphasis on the "Internal Affairs" of schools. The magnitude and factors of wastage are highlighted to properly put into focus the management challenges of the phenomenon in the 21st Century and beyond.

INTRODUCTION

According to Article 26 of the universal declaration of Human Right in December, 1948;

Everyone has the right to Education. This shall be free at least in the elementary and primary stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory ... Parents have prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

This well stated declaration acted as an impetus for global commitment towards formal education. In the sixties, education in general and primary education in particular became popularised as a basic requirement for overall national development by the emergence of human capital economic.

Specifically, primary education, according to Adesina(1989) contributes to the alleviation of mass poverty, narrows income gap and above all, it leads to an improvement in the living standard of the people.

Besides the economic dimension of primary education supply, Nwagu(1976:4) opined that "The education provided must be directed towards the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human dignity, rights and fundamental freedoms"

Awokoya(1952) in Nwagu(1976) stressed that "Educational development is imperative and urgent and as such must be treated as a national emergency second only to war. It must move with the momentum of a revolution". The Universal primary Education (UPE) was introduced in the West in 1955, followed by the East in 1957, which subsequently led to the explosion of primary school enrolment. (Adesina1989).

The internal dynamics of primary schooling since the 50's has revealed a recurrent problem on the development of primary education - the phenomenon of wastage, (Nwadiana1992).

According to Western Nigerian Digest of Educational Statistics (1953 - 74) in Okedara(1979), "There was hardly a school generation, starting from the generation of 1955 - 1960, to that of 1969 - 1974 in which the drop-out rate was less than 43 percent.

UNESCO(1981) observed that " only 60% of school age children in developing world has access to schooling and less than 40% completed primary education and 15% of the pupils repeat classes".

To this end, this paper intends to examine the dynamics of wastage in primary education and the management challenges in the 21st century.

THE DYNAMICS OF WASTAGE IN PRIMARY EDUCATION:

The efficiency of any education system is measured by the amount and pattern of wastage. Education production process require various forms of resources which invariably are always in short supply and this being so must be meaningfully utilised to avoid wastage. (Ize-Iyamu1992).

Nwakwo(1981:90) views wastage in education as dropouts, repeats, premature withdrawal, misguided types of education, non-employment of school leavers and even brain-drain". Brimer and Pauli(1971:11) on the other hand gave a comprehensive analysis of wastage in education and identified five elements of wastage as follows:

1. Low value of school system's output by society in terms of demand for them in the labour market.
2. the failure in society's responsibility for human resources development. Here, no provision is made for universal education.
3. wastage occurs when the system is unable to hold the children recruited. In the end, they dropout and/or withdraw.
4. the failure of the education of the education system to get meaningful goals for implementation thereby making the learners feel that time spent is meaningfulness.
5. Omoregie(1984:72) feels that human learning is wasted when the system fails to recruit children into training owing to certain forms of differential treatment.

In the context of this paper, emphasis is focused on the dropout and repeat components of wastage in primary schooling.

At the National level, a darker picture of the wastage situation is painted as shown in table I where the dropout rate ranged from 37.4% to 51,7% between 1985 and 1990.

FACTORS OF EDUCATIONAL WASTAGE:

Studies on educational wastage have concentrated on situation factors such as illness, death of pupils or their parents, truancy and delinquency, pupil's ability and learning difficulties, financial problems, pregnancy or broken homes (Levy 1971; Nwagu 1976; Okedara 1979); in addition to the resources available to education, employment prospects, socio-physical environment; (Nwakwo 1981) with dominance among females and rural schools; (Coombs 1968; Aghenta 1985; Omorgie:1989) and opportunity cost of school continuation among other factors (World Bank 1968).

There are other factors affecting wastage in primary schooling which include the changing economy, household attitude toward

schooling, school location, the pattern of primary education goal implementation and the played down variable of school production process (Nwadiana, 1992).

(I) CHANGING ECONOMY

In a depressed economy such as ours today, where the income can no longer guarantee minimum standard of living, parents are known to withdraw their children from school because of financial difficulties on one hand and on the other hand, the economic value of these children as labour on farms and small businesses. Often times, they are withdrawn and hired as house-holds to yield income for their parents. Little wonder therefore that Nigeria is ranked as the thirteen poorest country in the world with per capital income or =N=2450" by the world Bank (1988). The government on its part has made efforts to encourage school attendance by making primary schooling tuition free. Even this being so, other private costs of primary education like books, uniforms, levies and other materials borne by parents out-weigh the social costs. Children whose parents cannot cope, have to drop out from school while some others repeat classes.

(II) HOUSEHOLD ATTITUDE TOWARD EDUCATION:

The socio-economic status of a household determines the pattern of attitude towards education. The poor uneducated and rural household exhibit low positive attitudes towards education. These households are impatient to understand and appreciate the long production cycle of education before it starts yielding dividends which in most cases occur in the long run (Ize-Iyamu(1992). Consequently, due to lack of incentives and support on the part of parents, these children are withdrawn from school. The current craze for material acquisition among very many people does not help matter either, it has so deflected the minds of most families away from schooling and as a result, the private financial allocation towards education has either decline or has been withdrawn (Nwagwu 1976).

(III) SCHOOL PATTERN:

According to Adesina(1987), the location of the school plays a great role in retaining children in school. If primary schools are well located, access to them will increase, distributive equity will be achieved, quality of the service will equally improve and in the end, internal efficiency will be enhanced. But more often than not, primary schools have not been equitably distributed. Children have to trek long distances as the existing schools are located far away from pupils' houses. Ebhohimen(1983) showed in a study that "some students travel between 0.25 and 5.0 kilometres while others travel between 5.5 and 17 kilometres to and from school. The distance of primary schools from pupils' homes has probably led to the denial of schooling opportunity among children of schools age and the eventual dropping out by those already schooling. This is prominent among such groups as the children of fishermen, migrant farmers and nomads.

(IV) THE LABOUR MARKET

The labour market in contemporary Nigeria is saturated. There is a glut of unemployable school leavers most of whom are not skilled. The rising pool of educated unemployed has adversely affected the education will of parents for their children. Formal education, to many parents is an investment as such, sizeable part of household income are allocated to private financing of education. Regrettably, according to Nwadiana(1992) schooling has turned to investment in frustration, faith in education has waned as people begin to question the rationale for schooling. In the early years of formal education, primary school leavers were highly demanded in the world of work, today, even secondary school leavers do serve as house helps. This has changed as qualification for jobs have been inflated with the expansion of educational opportunities at all levels. In the end, primary schooling has become a preparatory stage for secondary education. Not being sure of their children being employed, even after further schooling beyond the primary level, parents see other alternatives to schooling as more profitable materially. This has accounted for the volume of dropouts from primary school on one hand and the low education spirit among pupils in the system on the other.

(V) SCHOOL PRODUCTION VARIABLES:

Contemporary events have shown that the internal dynamics of primary school system that boarder on the production process variables play a crucial role in wastage. Such variables are: learning environment, the teacher in terms of his relationship with and ratio to learners, school organisational climate and the pattern of system's goals implementation (Nwagu 1976)

In a recent study by Ize-Iyamu(1992), it was shown that the following production process variables have high positive relationship with primary school wastage to the tune of school organisation climate ($r = 0.9569$), pupil teacher relationship ($r = 0.9375$) and classroom learning climate ($r = 0.7987$).

Learning environment in most public primary schools in Nigeria is inhibitive and hostile to learning. They are dehumanising because of neglect at a macro level. At the micro-level, are lack of leaning facilities such as chairs and tables, shortage of classrooms or classrooms without windows and doors and the punitive tone of the environment. Nwagu(1976:99) sums it all that, "many school dropouts were the victims of hostile environment. Some of them saw the schools as grim, joyless places with pretty and oppressive demands, rules and regulations".

Teacher-pupil relationship can promote or reduce wastage depending on how the teachers relate with them. Learning will be more meaningful and consequently wastage will be reduced if the teacher is humane, understanding, accessible and provides encouragement with in-built respect for learners. Teaching has failed to provide the present day teacher with minimum material comfort and hence, the guarantee for the future is unclear, sentencing him to what seems a perpetual life of decent poverty. The ratio of teacher to learners is a very crucial production process variable that affects the incidence of wastage. Small classroom size are easier to manage and allows for individualised instruction. They are likely to be more result oriented if the teachers teach with adequate resources and pupils are prepared to learn. In recent times, there is population explosion of learners in the primary schools making the classes too large for active teaching and learning. In the end many pupils fail , repeat or dropout. The effect of student teacher ratio in

wastage is confirmed by UNESCO(1981) sponsored study in Madagascar .

When the organisational school climate is authoritarian, highly structured with in-built bureaucracy, wastage is promoted. Pupils are likely to be more interested in schooling in a democratically friendly organisational climate.

One reason that pupils repeat classes, especially toward the end of a cycle, is that they believe this will improve their chances of passing the examinations for entry into the next level of education (World Bank 1988:50). This is a dysfunctional pattern of policy goals implementation where emphasis is on examination at the end of the cycle which is tied to entry into secondary education. This accounts for why wastage is very high at this end point of primary schooling in form of repetition or dropping out.

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES OF PUPIL WASTAGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY:

It is not likely that wastage phenomenon will reduce in Nigerian Primary Schools in view of their socio-economic ecology and internal dynamics. Nwadiani(1992) observes that it is likely to be compounded due to the rising cost of education and dwindling governmental fiscal resource allocation to primary Education sub-sector. If the above assertion is true, then it becomes imperative that managers of education prepare adequately to contend with wastage by evolving strategies of managing the phenomenon in the 21st century.

Economics of primary schooling has shown that primary education whether it is free as a service, it is paid for by "somebody". To this end, the unit cost of completion of the cycle is increased when a pupil drops out or repeats because the duration of primary schooling is extended and as such, resources are used up beyond the per learner budget. This is a waste more so when educational resources are inadequate in a depressing economy such as ours.

The side effect of wastage are grave, repetition for slow-learners may not significantly improve achievement in some cases, it de-motivates learners for it punctures their self image and even the prospects of success in the future are adversely affected.

- Dropping out creates higher future cost by way of inabilitating them either through "second chance" of formal education or non-formal education in the future when they must have grown into adults. For those who drop finally into society, they become social threats due to frustration.

The management challenges of pupils wastage relates to those of effective planning, financing and administration of primary education.

i. EFFECTIVE PLANNING:

A major purpose of primary education in Nigeria as stipulated in NPE(1981), is to prepare pupils for secondary education. Those who do not proceed to secondary schools waste away in labour market. The primary schools curriculum should be re-planned by diversifying it to enable the recipients to be self-reliant at the end of the cycle.

ii. SCHOOL MAPPING AND COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE:

School mapping is very crucial in the new educational management reform in Nigeria to not only enhance equal opportunities but to improve efficient use of limited resources allocated to primary education. Hallack(1977) views school mapping as "a dynamic process of identifying logically and systematically the communities and sites where educational facilities are to be located under a new educational policy". If school locational planning is effectively carried out by considering - the distance children have to walk or be transported to school, the school age population of area and the necessity of having classes and schools of acceptable size, wastage arising from lack of primary educational facilities and/or long distance pupils have to travel in search of knowledge would be reduced.

Beyond school mapping, Government authorities have to vigorously pursue the implementation of compulsory school attendance law at this level by embarking on large scale public enlightenment campaign.

iii. FINANCING:

The cause of the problems of primary education demand and supply is finance. It is observed that free education policy alone will not prevent wastage. The harsh economy has made the labour value of children very high at home hence they are withdrawn from school

REFERENCES

- Aghenta, J. A. (1985) A case study of Dropouts in Colleges of Education in Bendel State - Journal of Research in Curriculum, Vol. 3:1 pp.
- Brimer, M. A. and Pauli, L. (1971) Wastage in Education: A World Problem, Paris UNESCO, IBE
- Coombs, P. H. (1968) The World Educational Crises: A System Analysis. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ebhohimen, P. E. (1983) A Study of Catchment Areas of Secondary Schools in Okpebho Local Government Area of Bendel State, Nigeria. M. Ed. Thesis, University of Benin.
- Hallack, J. (1977) Cost Analysis in Education: A tool for Policy and Planning. London. The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Ize-Iyamu, P. I. (1992) An Analysis of Pupil wastage in Bendel State Primary Schools between 1982 and 1987, Ph. D. Thesis, University of Benin.
- Mohahan, W. G. (1975) Some Antecedents of Theory in Educational Administration. New York, Macmillan Pub. Co. Inc.
- Nwadiana, Mon (1992) An Analysis of the flow of funds to Public Education in Selected Southern States of Nigeria (1980 - 1990), Memo, Benin City.
- Nwagwu, N. A. (1976) UPE: Issues, Prospects and Problems. Benin City; Ethiope Publishing Corporation.
- Nwakwo, J. I. (1981) Educational Planning: Theory and Methods (Nigeria) Lahove: Izharsono.
- Okadara, J. I. (1979) A Preliminary Study of Primary School