

## **MANAGING EDUCATION WASTAGE FOR OPTIMAL OUTPUT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ORLU LGA OF IMO STATE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Nigeria as a developing country is unable to manage its educational system effectively and efficiently. This has resulted in the deterioration of school quality especially in the public secondary school system. It has also created internal inefficiency in the form of high failure and drop-out rate. This study examined managing education wastage for optimal output in the development of public secondary schools in Orlu. Managing education wastage reviewed school enrolment practices, student-teacher ratio and efficient utilization of school resources. The purpose of this study was achieved with the use of research questions and corresponding hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study comprised all the principals and teachers in public secondary schools in Orlu LGA of Imo State which is about 3,630. A sample size of 360 was selected using the Taro Yamane sample formula. Data was collected through a questionnaire titled managing education wastage for optimal output in the development of public secondary school questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.89. The findings of the study revealed that education wastage is a serious challenge in the development of secondary education. Thus; it reduces the size of enrollment and educational resources for both the individual and the school. Its proper management will propel productive individuals that will boost economic and national development. However, it was recommended that data on enrolment and dropouts should be kept well by the school management to facilitate proper monitoring and evaluation of internal school efficiency. This possibly will increase school efficiency and teachers' satisfaction.*

**Keywords: Education Wastage, enrolment, dropout and education output**

### **INTRODUCTION**

All over the globe, education empowers individuals into achievement of productivity and sustenance of their living conditions in an efficient manner. It equips individuals with skills and knowledge that enable them to contribute towards the progression and expansion of their immediate environment where they live (Nwala, 2010). An educated individual is not only able to sustain the living conditions of himself and his family in an adequate manner but is also able to render an effective contribution towards the well-being of the community. (Smetana, 2014)

Wastage is the term given to anything which has lost its purpose and value. (Okechukwu, 2013). Wastage is being used within the system of education to provide description of various aspects that would lead to failure of the education system in the achievement of its goals and objectives. The premature withdrawals and non-employability of school leavers from the education system are ways of measuring wastage. Education wastage emanates from failures and dropouts (Egwunyenga, 2014). The negative effects of wastage hinges on the growth of every education system. Education wastage became a modern term in education system in Nigerian public secondary schools where school dropouts became hawkers and petty traders. It is seen in student's failure to reach large achievement levels and premature leaving (Igbineweka, 2010). Any student who receives education at any stage is expected to complete the education within the prescribed period. If the student withdraws from the course before completion, it results in wastage. Hence, the most popular use of the word wastage in education means the wastage of time, effort, and money (Duze, 2012). Educational wastage also manifests itself in the nation's failure to provide universal education for all, recruit students into the system and the failure of the system to set appropriate objectives. According to Henderson and Mapp (2012) educational wastage occur when there is a decrease,

reduced, withdrawn, unusable, extermination and decay of useable things or activities within the educational system.

Dropout refers to withdrawal from school before completing a particular cycle of education. It is also wastage of resources, wastage of the student years and reduction in the number of successful graduates. Thus, the meager resources allocated for education will be wasted or underutilized. The gap between the ideal scheme and the actual output in the secondary education system, particularly of the developing countries like Nigeria is of great concern. The considerable amount of wastage in secondary education in Nigeria was the focus in achieving universal secondary education (UNESCO/ UNICEF, 2015) and this has been an obstacle for the attainment of educational goals set for the cycle. Failure is the inability to meet the minimum academic standards of an educational system. This can be as a result of fear, lack of motivation, procrastination among others. Failure and dropout rates are commonly used parameters to measure education wastage in the public secondary system in Orlu LGA of Imo State. Different writers have suggested the reason for these failures. Habtamu (2012) confirmed that wastage in the form of dropout is a major hindrance in public secondary schools. However, there is need for a continuous investigation into the area of wastage in every educational enterprise thus, it deals with human beings. Wastage in form of examination malpractices is a clear proof that either the teacher didn't teach well or the students didn't listen to the teacher during lessons. By this, the effort of the teacher was wasted, including the time, the knowledge and the money spent on the student, this has made the plans of Nigeria for a better secondary education a frustrated dream (Adair, 2011). The major aim of education in Nigeria was the training of a total child and the application of knowledge in the child's daily life (Agogo, 2012). When the student is trained and in reality the student couldn't use what was learnt to survive, be self-reliant or make a career for survival in a harsh economic nation, then educational wastage completed its all round negative duties in the life of the student. Considering Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, if the basic need of man is not met, other needs will not be actualized. Thus, if the basic need for food, shelter and clothing are not met, then education will not be considered vital because at that point, education may not be considered as a primary need of man. (Chike,2012).However, this study was prompted by the recent challenges facing the public secondary schools in Orlu that has consistently led to failures, being unsuccessful in academic performances and dropping out.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Wastage in education is a reflection of high level of inefficiency in the system and this has been considered a great challenge. Wastage describes a multiple of factors that make the realization of educational objectives challenging (UNESCO, 2013). It also results in poor cost effectiveness and seriously hampers the efforts towards achieving general literacy. In the recent times, it has been discovered that wastage poses a great problem to student's completion of secondary education in public secondary schools in Orlu. This results in high rates of failures and dropouts and sometimes leads to total withdrawal from school. Wastage is a combined effect of the phenomena of failure, repetition and dropout in a particular cycle of education (Akinwumi, 2017). Education wastage begins with schools recording a small decrease in student enrolment. Thus, public secondary schools in Orlu LGA of Imo State always record high rate of school dropouts as a result of some school, teacher and student related factors. Economic crisis which results to poverty has made many parents to withdraw their children from school thus, making them become apprentices. Even students who are in school sometimes loose interest in academic activities and end up failing examinations and repeating classes due to the fear of future unemployment. This however, makes the determination of the population of the students in public secondary schools in Orlu very difficult to ascertain by educational stakeholders. It has also caused a great problem to the achievement of education for all making planning tasking in public secondary schools. The above situation creates a big concern for the entire secondary school system since no achievement could be made in such an alarming environment.

In Orlu, the percentage of student who reaches the final grade of the secondary education cycle is low. Hence, the intension of this study was to ascertain how education wastage can be managed for optimal output in the development of public secondary schools in Orlu LGA of Imo State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

1. To determine the extent to which school enrolment practices manage education wastage in public secondary schools in Orlu LGA of Imo state.
2. To ascertain the extent to which maintained student-teacher ratio manages education wastage in public secondary schools in Orlu LGA of Imo State.
3. To find out the extent to which efficient utilization of school resources manage education wastage in public secondary schools in Orlu LGA of Imo State.

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent do school enrolment practices manage education wastage in public secondary schools in Orlu LGA of Imo State?
2. To what extent does maintained student-teacher ratio manage education wastage in public secondary schools in Orlu LGA of Imo State?
3. To what extent does efficient utilization of school resources manage education wastage in public secondary schools in Orlu LGA of Imo State?

### **Conceptualization**

#### **Education Wastage**

Education wastage describes the failure to achieve the intended results or goals that have been primarily set (UNESCO, 2017). Wastage in education connotes inefficiency in the use of educational resources by school administrators. In other words, poor relationship of educational inputs with outputs is education wastage. This includes the various obstacles that make the realization of educational objectives difficult. The phenomenon of education wastage becomes graver when considerable discrepancy occurs between the intended and actual outputs or when countries fail to achieve what they planned to. Education wastage manifests in so many ways such as in schools, parents, teachers and government factors. Education wastage as it applied to education means failure in schools. What is being wasted are human learning, school buildings, equipment and the labour of teachers (Morley, 2012). It manifests in non-certification and non-utilization of training acquired. It manifests when the objectives and goal of education are not clearly maintained. Wastage in education comprises all factors that bring about poor cost effectiveness in schools (Heilman, 2012). It is when the part of investment and the material that is meant to get utilised to encourage productivity is wasted and the expected and desired result is not achieved. However, it is not being successful in the achievement of goals and educational purposes. In other words, every factor which decreases the productivity of education, family or society system in achieving educational purposes contributes to education wastage.

The shortages and shortcomings in planning, implementation methods and guidelines, lack of competence of educational staff, shortage of facilities and lack of co-operation among educational staff, society and family are the important basis of educational wastage (Salazar, 2014). Moreso, wastage in education goes beyond quantitative efficiency and its affects quality. Although these two aspects of wastage seem to reflect the quantitative feature and are in no way separated from the quality of education. It could be used as an expression of efficiency of resource management (Jacob, 2012). Education wastage includes the ratio of input output of learners, failures and dropouts. Thus, it is also failure to invest psychologically and sociologically in the economic demands of education, even religious and spiritual aspects affects education. However, wastage in education reduces the effectiveness of the system and as the rate increases, it becomes a symptom of serious defects in the internal operation of the system (UNESCO, 2017). Precisely, wastage and efficiency are negative and positive dimensions of the same phenomenon. This clearly indicates that when the degree of

educational wastage is high, the efficiency of the system becomes low and vice-versa (Owhondah, 2020).

### **Failure and Dropout**

Education in Nigeria suffers from several challenges including poor funding, inadequate classrooms and teaching aids, low quality teachers, poor learning environment among others. These shortcomings yield poor educational achievement and employability choices. Failure is the inability to meet the minimum academic standards of an educational system. This can be as a result of fear, lack of motivation, procrastination among others (Arowolo, 2016).

Dropout is the untimely withdrawal from school. The student who withdraws from school prematurely ends up not obtaining any certificate of graduation. The term "dropout" qualifies those students who could not complete their education programme at any level of education due to one reason or the other (Ayodele & Bada, 2017). This is most common in rural areas where there is abject poverty and ignorance and these children form a recognizable part of the family labour force. Dropping out from school occurs after children have previously achieved access or gained admission to school. Among these are issues of access and equity, quality and relevance, drop-outs, non-transition and failure. This evidence indicates that student drop-out is one of the stumbling-blocks in the attempt to achieve educational goals in the developing countries.

According to (Orwasa, 2014). Drop-outs are categorized into four groups:

*-Quiet drop-outs:* These students are low achievers who have experienced continued failure through most of the time in their school. Their reaction to chronic failure is not overt. Their primary distinguishing characteristics is their stoicism.

*-Low achievers:* These students have experienced continued failure but are unlike group one, because they react to failure in disruptive annoying ways, this group avoids failure by avoiding school through truancy. Paradoxically, they are punished for their bad behaviors while in school and if they also try to avoid school.

*-Non-curricular:* The causes of the problems of this group reside outside school. There may be problems of abuse, drugs, school, poverty, health and myriad other as to why the child doesn't learn and becomes truant and eventually quits school. The child cannot learn if he/she comes to school tired, hungry, and afraid.

*-Persisting students:* This group has poor performance but has compensatory behaviors to continue to attend school. These compensatory behaviours could include athletics, art, or cheating especially during examinations. Some students from this group may actually graduate but they are barely literate. Dropping out exacts a terrible personnel toll on the student involved and absorbs a large share of the limited resources available for education. Finding ways to minimize education wastage must play a central role in any serious effort to reach the goal of Education for All. (Thompson, 2014). Drop-out can be caused by Peer influence, poverty, ignorance, high proportion of students enrolled at the same time, school location, school safety and disciplinary policies, issues faced by males and females as a result of gendered norms and values, delinquency and the desires to become a millionaire within a day makes it difficult for majority of the students to concentrate on their studies thereby increasing the dropout rate (Bloom, 2010).

### **Management of Failure and Dropout in Public Secondary Schools**

In many countries the proportion of wastage due to failure and drop-out differs for boys and girls. Drop-out is a more significant factor for girls than boys in northern Nigeria. Evaluation of student's achievement should be continuous with the aim of detecting and compensating learning difficulties rather than selecting students for promotion. (Bekele, 2014). To achieve this according to Ozioko (2015), Government should:

- Initiate advocacy measures for parents and students through print and electronic media, and award scholarships and bursaries to students of secondary schools to ameliorate the effect of the poverty of their parents/guardians. Government should also reintroduce education loan for students to enable poor parents pay the fees and procure needed materials for their children.

- Review secondary education curriculum; Even though government has not relented in its effort to review curriculum of education at all levels in Nigeria, the review of secondary education curriculum is highly imperative in view of the shortcomings inherent in it. Such review should however be a regular process.
- Recruit quality candidates into secondary schools; In view of the need to improve the quality of students in secondary schools, government should ensure that a thorough admission process that will give priority to merit be put in place in Nigeria. Passing entrance examination should however be complemented by a n interview process which will ensure that only the best candidates are recruited into schools and that the quality of secondary education will improve from its status quo in the country.

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive survey design which focused on describing and interpreting existing conditions, prevailing practices and the on-going process. The population of this study was three thousand six hundred and thirty (3,630), consisting of one hundred and six principals (106) and three thousand five hundred and twenty four teachers (3,524) in the eleven (11) LGA's in Orlu Senatorial Zone of Imo State. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the respondents for the study. The instrument "Managing Education Wastage for Optimal Output in the Development of Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire" (MEWOODPSSQ) was used to generate data for the study and a reliability coefficient of 0.94 was obtained through a test-re-test method which was considered adequate.

## RESULTS

**Research Question One:** To what extent does school admission policy manage education wastage in public secondary schools in Orlu Senatorial Zone of Imo State?

**Table 1: Respondents' opinion on the extent to which school admission policy manage education wastage in public secondary schools.**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Principals		Teachers		Mean Set	Rank order	Decision
	School admission policy manage education wastage in public Secondary Schools	$\bar{x}_1$	SD <sub>1</sub>	$\bar{x}_2$	SD <sub>2</sub>	$\frac{x_1 + x_2}{2}$		
1	Fresh admission process is a tool for managing education wastage	3.5	0.61	3.3	0.50	3.40	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Agreed
2	Good policy implementation manages education wastage.	3.4	0.64	3.2	0.72	3.30	5 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
3	Appropriate school rules and regulations manage education wastage.	3.6	0.60	3.3	0.51	3.45	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Agreed
4	Adequate administrative structures manage education wastage.	3.6	0.73	3.4	0.63	3.50	1 <sup>st</sup>	Agreed
5	Supervision of admission process manage education wastage.	3.4	0.80	3.3	0.45	3.35	4 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
6	Accurate record keeping manage education wastage	3.3	0.66	3.2	0.74	3.25	6 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
7	Continuity in leadership manage education wastage	2.1	1.46	3.2	0.61	2.65	7 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
	<b>Aggregate</b>	<b>3.27</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>0.25</b>	<b>3.27</b>		<b>Agreed</b>

Table 1 showed that school admission policy manage education wastage in public secondary schools. The fresh admission process, its timely implementation with appropriate schools rules and regulation minimizes school wastage thus the ability of the administrative structure to supervise admission process and to accurately keep records will breed continuity in the school system.

**Research Question Two:** To what extent does maintenance of prescribed student-teacher ratio manage education wastage in public secondary schools in Orlu Senatorial Zone of Imo State?

**Table 2: Respondents’ opinion on the extent maintenance of prescribed student-teacher ratio manages education wastage in public secondary schools.**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Principals (N - 62)		Teachers (N - 893)		Mean Set $\frac{x_1 + x_2}{2}$	Rank order	Decision
		$\bar{x}_1$	SD <sub>1</sub>	$\bar{x}_2$	SD <sub>2</sub>			
<b>Maintenance of prescribed student-teacher ratio for managing education wastage in public Secondary Schools</b>								
8	The school has maintained student-teacher ratio that encourages students’ progression	3.0	0.67	3.6	0.51	3.29	6 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
9	The school rules and regulations are appropriate and encourages students’ retention	3.0	0.89	3.2	0.72	3.10	7 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
10	Planned classroom capacity encourages students learning ehaviour	3.4	0.73	3.2	0.59	3.28	4 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
11	Professionally oriented teachers are available to regulate students’ classroom behavior	3.3	0.72	3.6	0.66	3.45	1 <sup>st</sup>	Agreed
12	Spacious classrooms and sitting position encourages student’ learning behaviour	3.5	0.71	3.2	0.77	3.35	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Agreed
13	Efficient follow up and support are offered to students in the school	3.2	0.62	3.1	0.71	3.15	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Agreed
14	Job requirements are spelt out to enhance student learning outcome	3.3	0.61	3.3	0.48	3.30	5 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
<b>Aggregate</b>		<b>3.24</b>	<b>0.71</b>	<b>3.31</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>2.85</b>		<b>Agreed</b>

Table 2 above demonstrated that maintenance of prescribed student-teacher ratio manage education wastage in public secondary schools. Hence, good student-teacher ratio that encourages student progression with availability of professionally oriented teachers and efficient follow-up and support for students will reduce education wastage.

**Question Three:** To what extent does efficient utilization of school resources manage education wastage in public secondary schools in Orlu Senatorial Zone of Imo State?

**Table 3: Respondents’ opinion on the extent efficient utilization of school resources manage education wastage in public secondary schools**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Principals (N - 62)		Teachers (N - 893)		Mean Set $\frac{x_1 + x_2}{2}$	Rank order	Decision
		$\bar{x}_1$	SD <sub>1</sub>	$\bar{x}_2$	SD <sub>2</sub>			
	<b>Efficient utilization of school resources manages education wastage in public Secondary Schools</b>							
15	The school monitors the utilization of human and material resources	3.7	0.69	3.4	0.16	3.55	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Agreed
16	The school equip laboratories for practical skill development	3.6	1.42	3.3	0.11	3.45	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Agreed
17	The school environment supports teaching and learning	3.3	0.62	3.2	0.68	3.25	6 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
18	Classroom resources and environment supports students' progression	3.5	0.59	3.3	0.47	3.40	7 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
19	The school builds and complete projects as and when due	3.3	0.45	3.5	0.67	3.42	4 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
20	Internal Generated Revenue (IGR) is adequate for school demands	3.3	0.62	3.2	0.75	3.26	5 <sup>th</sup>	Agreed
21	Teacher classroom management skills are adequate for student progression	3.7	0.57	3.4	0.62	3.56	1 <sup>st</sup>	Agreed
	<b>Aggregate</b>	<b>3.48</b>	<b>0.71</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>3.41</b>		<b>Agreed</b>

Table 3 presented that efficient utilization of school resources will manage education wastage in public secondary schools in Orlu Senatorial Zone of Imo State hence, monitoring of human and material resources will enhance learning and facilitate internal school efficiency.

### Discussion of Findings

The findings on research question one revealed that to a high extent, school enrollment practices manage education wastage in public secondary schools in Orlu Senatorial Zone of Imo state with the grand mean score of 3.2. This result collaborates with an earlier finding of the study by Asoka (2018) who investigated Poor Admission policy as a cause of wastage in the education system. In his findings, adequate admission policy by the school will aid students' academic progression. The study relates with it in the sense that wastage in the public secondary system is mostly caused by poor admission policy. This implied that an adequate enrolment policy for students will help students' progression and also serve as a check for students' failures and dropouts.

Findings on research question two presented that to a high extent, maintenance of prescribed student-ratio manage education wastage in public secondary schools with a grand mean of 2.85. This result collaborates with an earlier finding of study by Kantu and Ogbonna (2020) that investigated on the Effect of Student-teacher ratio on the academic performance of the public secondary school in Ojo Local Government Area of Osun State. The finding revealed that the student-teacher ratio and academic performance has inverse relationship. Therefore, efforts should be made to reduce the number of students attached to a teacher in public secondary schools. This relates with the study in the sense that wastage in public secondary school system is mostly caused by a large class capacity. This implied that prescribed student-teacher ratio will help students' academic progress and their relationship with teachers. This will enhance student retention and minimize dropout rate.

Research question three showed that to a very high extent, efficient utilization of school resources will manage wastage in public Secondary Schools with a grand mean score of 3.41. This

result collaborates with an earlier finding of Okoli and Ogbonnaya (2015) that carried out a descriptive survey on the adequacy of the material resources required for effective implementation of upper basic education business studies curriculum in Ebonyi State. They recommended that government and other educational stakeholders should pool their resources together to ensure that facilities and textbooks are adequately provided since education for all is the responsibility. Thus, efficient resource utilization will encourage students' academic progression and graduation as and when due.

## **CONCLUSION**

Education globally is seen as a tool for national and individual advancement. There is no universal solutions to the problems of education wastage. Educators and policy makers need first to identify the predominant causes of failures and dropout in their particular situation and then devise appropriate solutions which may need to target particular class, environment and communities. Such decisions will be more soundly based when a suitable data collection system is in place, which can then provide feedback once the corrective measures are taken. Any attempt to reduce education wastage must be comprehensive and systematic in order to deal with its multiple causes. Addressing these challenges requires working with members of local communities as well as with political and other educational leaders. It is thus incumbent on teachers and school administrators to make their citizens aware of the cost of families and to society when students are excluded or fail in school.

The elimination of dropout would not necessarily solve the problem of under achievement. Student-centered instruction and various other pedagogical improvements can raise the learning achievements of all students and thereby increase the efficiency of secondary education in public secondary schools in Orlu Senatorial Zone of Imo State. Failure and dropout were taken as major forms of education wastage in this study. If education wastage is reduced, more citizens would have access to education and literacy level will increase. When more people are literate and enlightened, economic and national development will accelerate hence students are equipped with the skills that will translate into productivity.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Data on enrolment and drop-out should be well documented by the school management; this will maintain good student-teacher ratio and quality instruction for early intervention that will motivate students to remain in school. This however, will as well facilitate proper monitoring and evaluation of internal school efficiency.

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