
Factors affecting the Standard of Education in Public Primary Schools in Gboko Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria

¹Markus Kwaji; ²Aginde Terdoo David; ³Ode Sunday Adikpe & ⁴Sylvester Igwe Sylvester

^{1,2,3}Department of Vocational and Technical Education, Benue State University, Makurdi

⁴Department of Technology Education, School of Technology and Science Education, Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria

Email:marcuskhore@gmail.com,terdoodavid22@gmail.com,odesundayadikpe@gmail.com, sylvester.sylvester01@yahoo.com

Corresponding Author: Markus Kwaji

ABSTRACT

The study examined the factors affecting the standard of education in public schools. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study and was carried out in Gboko Local Government of Benue State. The population of this study was 264 respondents. 24 primary schools out of 173 were sampled. A 12-item structured questionnaire developed by the researchers titled "Factors Affecting the Standard of Education in Public Primary in Gboko Local Government" was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts and a reliability of 0.83 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha Correlation Co-efficient which proved the instrument was reliable to be used for fieldwork. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions whereby a mean cut-off point of 3.50 was used for decision making. From the result obtained, the study concludes that different factors affect the standard of education in public primary schools in the region ranging from teachers, parents, pupils to government factor. The study also found remedies such as an adequate number of teachers, regular payment of teacher's salary, adequate allocation of funds for school facilities, etc. The study recommends among others that stakeholders of public primary schools that are the government, parents, and teachers should play their role seriously in order to improve the condition of public primary schools structurally, morally and otherwise. The government should avoid playing politics with teacher's welfare. Adequate funds should be allocated for schools facilities in public primary schools to maintain the standard of education.

Keywords: Standard of education, Educational factors, Gboko local government

INTRODUCTION

The beginning of development in any nation is education. Education is a process for transmitting culture in terms of continuity and growth for

disseminating knowledge either to ensure social control or to guarantee rational direction of the society or both.

Educational standards are set of rules that help every school keep the content and objectives of education in such a way that it makes a positive impact on her citizens. Ifedili and Ochuba (2009), "educational standards set out the quality of education that is acceptable to her citizens. It provides for the purpose, direction, and criteria for performance evaluation. The government sets the policies and the policies are implemented by the masses. The extent to which these policies are implemented is judged by the standards". Teachers without Borders (2006) reported that the standard of education is how the products of schools can be measured in terms of outcome.

Ochuba (2008) opined that goals of education can only be achieved with a well-organized school system that would ensure that all aspects of school life are well articulated and effectively coordinated. In another words, the educational standard can only be maintained when there are adequate facilities, responsive stakeholders, conducive environment, and a proper leadership style.

It is imperative to note that education cannot run smoothly without adequate facilities. Educational factors are then those things that are going in opposition to the laydown roles of education. They are issues that arise to degrade the successful implementation of educational goals. They include insufficient facilities, inadequate funding, and poor learning environment. In view of the great importance of education to the growth and development of the society, no government conscious of its responsibilities of creating opportunities that can affect the development of its citizens and the country, in general, will fold its arms and watch the process of education toyed with. Today, the Federal Government attaches high premium on education development as can be seen from the investment in education by both the federal and state governments.

Gboko Local Government came into being by decree as a result of the 1976 local government reforms. It has Gboko town as its capital. It is also the traditional seat of the Tiv tribe. The local government is situated in the North Eastern part of the State. The local government is bounded in the North by Tarka Local Government, west by Gwer and Konshishal Local Government Areas, on the

east by Buruku Local Government Area and south by Ushongo Local Government Area. The local Government comprises of predominantly Tiv speaking people. It is made up of Mbayio, Ipav, Mbatrav, Yandev, and Mbatierev clans. The LGA is being divided into 17 council wards; these are Mbatser, Matyu, Ukpekpe, Mbalahan, Igyorov, Mbakpegh, Yandev-North, Yandev-South Mbadim, Mbaanku, Mbaavarakaa, GbokoNweh West, Gboko-South, Gboko central, Gboko East, Mbadam and Mbakwes.

In respect of education, the LGA has about one hundred and seventy-three (173) public primary schools. Their distributions are according to districts/township which are as follows: Mbatyav (47), Mbatierev (23), Mbayion (32), Ipav (36), Yandev (17), and Gboko Township (18).

It is imperative to note that Gboko Local Government has many post-primary schools both public and private. It also boasts of high institutions like Mkar University, Akperan Orshi College of Agriculture Yandev, FideiP olytechnic Gboko, School of Nursing and midwifery Mkar, health Technology School Mkar, Reformed Theological School Mkar.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There is a saying that 'No house build on a weak foundation will stand the test of time'. There is no doubt that the foundation of the 6-3-3-4 system is the primary section, this means, what happens at all other levels of the system depend on what happened in the primary section. Therefore the researcher centered on the pronounced problems of public primary schools in Gboko Local Government Area that are highlighted as follows: Shortage of Infrastructure, Shortage of teachers, Shortage of funds and management. Also one of the major problems is the arrival of private schools in the country which has defeated public primary schools, as schools with unchallenging academic work built only for children of the poor, people believe that private primary schools are more productive than their public counterparts. The effect is devastating since many people want to transfer their children from public primary schools to private primary schools.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that affect the standard of public primary schools in Gboko local government area of Benue State. Specifically, it intends to:

1. Determine the factors affecting the standard of education in public primary schools in Gboko local government area of Benue state.
2. To make appropriate remedies to the factors to ensure high-performance standards in public primary schools in Gboko Local Government Area of Benue State.

Research Questions

The followings research questions guided the researchers in conducting the study:

1. What are the factors that are affecting the standard of education in public primary schools in Gboko Local Government Area of Benue State?
2. What are the remedies to those factors affecting the standard of education in public primary schools in Gboko Local Government of Benue State?

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Gboko Local Government Area of Benue State. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Out of the 173 primary schools, 24 public primary schools were sampled from the entire local government. Four (4) primary schools from each of the five districts, and also four (4) from the township. Ten teachers from each school and twenty-four (24) administrators, making a total of two hundred and sixty-four (264) persons.

The researcher used the questionnaire as an instrument. The questionnaire was designed with a Likert-type five (5) point rating scale as shown below. Strongly Agreed SA (5), Agreed A (4), Undecided UD (3), Disagree D (2), Strongly Disagree SD (1).

Literature was reviewed to gather information that helped in framing and structuring the questionnaire items. It was validated by the supervisor and some headmasters/headmistress randomly selected. The data collected was analyzed using Cronbach Alpha Correlation Co-efficient which yielded 0.83.

The coefficient indicated high internal consistency which proved that the instrument was reliable to be used for fieldwork. The data collected were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer research questions whereby a mean cut-off point of 3.50 was used for decision making. Any mean score of 3.50 and above was agreed as being a factor while any mean score below 3.50 was disagreed upon.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question One: What are the factors that are affecting the standard of education in public primary schools in Gboko Local Government Area of Benue State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Factors Affecting the Standard of Education in Publication Primary Schools in Gboko Local Government Area of Benue State

| S/No | Questionnaire Items | \bar{x} | STD | Remarks |
|------|---|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1 | Inadequate number of teachers | 3.80 | 2.30 | Agree |
| 2 | Poor qualities of teachers | 4.69 | 2.85 | Agree |
| 3 | Lack of infrastructural facilities | 4.17 | 2.40 | Agree |
| 4 | Teachers poor attitudes toward work | 4.54 | 2.81 | Agree |
| 5 | Lack of inspection and supervision | 4.11 | 2.40 | Agree |
| 6 | Wrong conception of public towards education | 4.21 | 2.65 | Agree |
| 7 | Lack of motivation of teachers | 4.36 | 2.84 | Agree |
| 8 | Wrong leadership style by headmaster/headmistress | 4.42 | 2.83 | Agree |
| 9 | Bad parental attitudes towards education | 3.87 | 2.57 | Agree |
| 10 | Unsteady payment of teachers salary | 4.74 | 2.94 | Agree |
| 11 | Inadequate teaching facilities | 4.65 | 2.84 | Agree |
| 12 | Poor funding by state Government | 4.71 | 2.89 | Agree |
| | Grand Mean/Deviation | 4.36 | 2.69 | Agree |

Source: Fieldwork 2017

The results in Table 1 above shows that items 1-12 have mean scores above the cut-off point of 3.50 for respondents from the public primary schools and thus are the factors affecting the standard of public primary schools in Gboko Local Government Area of Benue State. The grand standard deviation is 2.69 which show that the responses far deviated on the disagreement category. The grand mean of 4.36 reveals high level of factors. This indicates that Inadequate

number of teachers, Poor qualities of teachers, Lack of infrastructural facilities, Teachers poor attitudes toward work, Lack of inspection and supervision, Public behavior towards education, Lack of motivation of teachers, Headmaster/headmistress leadership style, Parental attitudes towards education, Unsteady payment of teachers salary, Inadequate teaching facilities, and Poor funding by state Government are the major factors affecting the standard of education in Gboko Local Government Area of Benue state.

Research Question Two: What are the remedies to those factors affecting the standard of education in public primary schools in Gboko Local Government of Benue State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Remedies on the Factors Affecting the Standard of Education in Public Primary Schools in Gboko Local Government of Benue State?

| S/No | Questionnaire Items | \bar{x} | STD | Remarks |
|------|--|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1 | Adequate number of teachers | 4.27 | 2.65 | Agree |
| 2 | Adequate Qualities of teachers | 4.72 | 2.88 | Agree |
| 3 | Adequate infrastructural facilities | 4.44 | 2.62 | Agree |
| 4 | Teachers good attitudes toward work | 4.61 | 2.89 | Agree |
| 5 | Proper inspection and supervision | 4.59 | 2.76 | Agree |
| 6 | Good public behavior towards education | 4.56 | 2.74 | Agree |
| 7 | Proper motivation of teachers | 4.73 | 2.91 | Agree |
| 8 | Good leadership style by headmaster/headmistress | 4.61 | 2.82 | Agree |
| 9 | Good attitudes of parent towards education | 4.50 | 2.70 | Agree |
| 10 | Steady payment of teachers salary | 4.77 | 2.95 | Agree |
| 11 | Adequate teaching facilities | 4.69 | 2.89 | Agree |
| 12 | Adequate funding by state Government | 4.71 | 2.88 | Agree |
| | Grand Mean/Deviation | 4.60 | 2.81 | Agree |

Source: Fieldwork 2017

Results in table 2, shows that the mean scores of all the items were above the cut-off point of 3.50 and thus were agreed as remedies to the factors affecting the standard of public primary school in Gboko local government area of Benue State. The grand mean is 4.60 and a standard deviation of 2.81, thus indicating that the responses widely deviated.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that Inadequate number of teachers, Poor qualities of teachers, Lack of infrastructural facilities, Teachers poor attitudes toward work, Lack of inspection and supervision, Wrong conception of public towards education, Lack of motivation of teachers, Wrong leadership style by headmaster/headmistress, Bad parental attitudes towards education Unsteady payment of teacher's salary, Inadequate teaching facilities, and Poor funding by the state Government are major factors that affect the standard of public primary school in Gboko local government area of Benue State.

An inadequate number of teachers have been identified as a factor. This is being supported by Moja, T. (2000) said that a big challenge of 6-3-3-4 system of education was still the recruitment, selection, and retention of the right number and quality of teachers needed. A feedback report of the monitoring team from the state primary education board to schools under Gboko Local Government Education Authority of 20th August 2003 noted the bias in staffing of primary school whereas those schools in towns and settlement areas are overstaffed.

Poor qualities of teachers have been identified as a factor in Gboko Local Government Area. It is one thing to have the certificate and another to have the quality. Obidike (2017) opined that several education and government authorities have observed that the present educational opportunities offered to learners at primary school level lack quality in terms of teaching and learning. In view of that, Lassa (2000) reflected that education cannot be provided by just anybody, it requires a teacher who plans and delivers the lessons of instruction in such a way that the objectives of the lesson can be achieved.

Poor infrastructural facilities as has been identified as a factor. This simply means there is a deficiency in term of infrastructural facilities such as classrooms, staff room and rest in the public schools in Gboko Local Government t Area of Benue State. These have affected the teachers and the students as well. Taiwo (1980) said that facility such as classrooms, desk, seat and other furniture materials aids learning and teaching.

Poor attitudes towards work by teachers have also been identified as a factor. Lack of motivation has always been the reason why teachers do not have the

right attitude towards their work. They go to school, prepare their work but most of the time, they feel lazy to teach. This attitude is not encouraging as it affects the performance of the pupils morally and academically.

Lack of frequent inspection and supervision was also being noted as a factor. This has been affecting the schools in Gboko local government. The local government education authorities who are charged with such duties of monthly inspection and supervision complained that funds for transportation and allowances for the officers has never been paid by the state government and this has consequently been affecting the aspect of the inspection and supervision.

Pupil's behavior towards education is a factor here. Most of the pupils do not attend school regularly. Dondo (2002) opined that pupils in public primary schools do not pay serious attention to studies. They return from school, drop their bags and wait for the next day. Some of the few pupils that do attend school tend to come without their learning materials. Dondo further identified stubbornness among school pupils as one of the factors that accelerates the falling academic standards in public primary schools.

Motivational factor, like teachers promotion, annual salary increment have all been lacking in Gboko local government area. This has degraded the morale of teachers in public primary schools in the region. It is a clear indication that motivation of teachers is one factor that if tackled can enhance effective performance standard among the pupils. Taiwo (1982) suggested that attention should be given to the problem of retraining teachers in their profession and providing their development and happiness.

Wrong leadership style by the headmaster/headmistress has been noted as a factor as some head teachers in the local government lead mostly by intimidation of subordinates which subsequently does not allow for harmonious working relationship. Evidence showed that selection of heads has been full of politics and favoritism. Most of them tend to be dictation and this has had an adverse effect on the educational system here in Gboko.

Parental attitudes towards education, this has been noted in Gboko local government as most of the parents have failed to ensure their pupils attend schools regularly. Wilder, (2014) advised parents to live up to their expectation of providing quality education for their children. They can contribute their own quarter by ensuring these pupils attend school daily and providing the necessary learning materials to their kids.

Unsteady payment of teacher's salary has been noted as a major factor in Benue State in general. Workers not only teachers face poor salary scale and bonuses, as well as irregular payments of salaries. It is a sad practice that teachers have to take industrial actions before they get their salaries almost every year. In Benue, teachers are being own for over ten (10) month salary. This has affected the standard of education as most of the teachers in Benue have other businesses to support them and their families. This way, they spend more time attending their businesses than they do in class. This is a disaster in Benue as a whole with the huge amount of money the federal government has been releasing through the Paris club, but still, the Benue State Government found it difficult to pay teachers salary steadily.

Poor teaching and learning facilities have been identifying as a major factor. Most public primary schools and in Benue specifically Gboko local government are in very bad conditions. The teaching environments are not conducive. The buildings are dilapidated and most of them lack teaching materials. Schools lack practical or technical facilities. A poor up to date practical facility makes education to be rather theoretical and quantitative.

And finally, the findings revealed that poor funding by the state government has been noted as another major factor. Omokhunu (2015) noted that states could not match the 40 percent Federal Government grant allocated for the implementation of Universal Basic Education programmes in states. According to the analysis done by a leading media outlet "Daily Trust" in 2016, the joint expenditure of the federal and 33 state governments on education is 8.44% of their total budget for the year. Public primary schools in Gboko Local Government are poorly funded. This could be as a result of corruption in the government sector. This has affected the keeping up to standard schools in the estate.

CONCLUSION

It is cleared that inadequate number of teachers, poor qualities of teachers, lack of infrastructural facilities, teachers poor attitudes toward work, lack of inspection and supervision, wrong conception of pupils towards education, lack of motivation of teachers, wrong leadership style by headmaster/headmistress, bad parental attitudes towards education, unsteady payment of teachers salary, inadequate teaching facilities, and poor funding by state Government are noted factor that has been degrading the standard of public primary schools in Gboko Local Government Area of Benue State. Consequently, these have led to pupils poor performance often times.

RECOMMENDATION

From the findings, some remedies were provided and this has led the researcher to the following recommendations:

1. Benue State Government should ensure an adequate number of teachers and recruitment of teachers should be based on merit so as to get qualitative teachers in the public primary schools in Gboko local government.
2. The government should ensure steady payment of teachers' salaries as and when due. Their annual salary increment should be given as when due also. These would also serve as a motivation on the side of the teachers.
3. The government should allocate adequate funds for the provision of facilities in all the public primary schools in Benue. These facilities are classrooms, chalkboard, computers, desks and chairs, staff rooms. The ones that are dilapidated should be renovated. Also, regular inspection and supervision should be carried out month by the state education authority to maintain the facilities on the ground and also to motivate the teachers.
4. Teaching is a profession; teachers should not be lazy in handling their everyday duty. They should teach the pupils as it has always been said that "teachers reward is in heaven".
5. Pupils should be zealous to learn. They should avoid truancy in school. Adhere to the school rules and regulation, by doing that their future is certain.

6. Parents should give proper home training to their children and encourage them about the importance of school in the development of human and nation as a whole.

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