WASTAGE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AKWA IBOM STATE OF NIGERIA: CAUSAL FACTORS AND CONTROL MEASURES

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Abstract
The purpose of this paper is exploring the issue of wastage in public secondary schools, focusing on the factors contributing to wastage and its implications on educational outcomes. Wastage in public secondary schools involve dropout rates, repetition of grades and underachievement. Factors contributing to wastage include socio-economic, disparities, inadequate infrastructure, ineffective teaching method lack of resource and socio-cultural influences. The consequences of wastage are detrimental to both individual students and the society at large.
Key Words: Wastage, Causal factors, Control measures, Public secondary schools.

Introduction

Education is the development of man to enable him to create and recreate himself. That is why the educated populace is productive, creative, innovative, and resourceful. The kind of education envisaged here includes the acquisition of skills which enable the individual to contribute to economic growth both of the individual and of the nation. Indeed, and as enunciated in the National Policy on Education document (FRN, 2004), Nigeria's national education goals include among other things, the acquisition of appropriate skills as well as the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competences which enable the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. Many of these skills are acquired in the course of secondary education.

Secondary education is obtained after primary education. It is divided into two sections – the Junior Secondary School and the Senior Secondary School sections. According to Ehinola (2019), secondary education is seen as an avenue for the acquisition of some basic skills which would enhance or facilitate effective interaction with members of the society. It is also to prepare the young adults for the purposeful organization of oneself for the maximal achievement of one's potentials, in order to be able to withstand the complexity of living in the society. This means that secondary education enables a child to acquire skills, abilities, competence that will help him affect his society positively. It develops a child to contribute to social and interpersonal relationship having positive regard to self and others.

A research carried out by Amaonye and Amachuna (2018) highlighted the place of planning as a veritable tool in curbing wastage in secondary education in Nigeria. They emphasized the fact that there are student-related, teacher-related, and school-related factors in the planning that aims to curb wastage in secondary education. This paper seeks to show that beyond the above mentioned factors, there are many others in the planning that curbs or controls wastage in secondary education in Nigeria. In examining the factors involved in the control of wastage in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, this paper will first attempt to identify the factors that cause the wastage. It will then identify and examine the measures for controlling the wastage; and finally proffer some recommendations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The paper is based on human capital theory, developed by economists Gary Becker which emphasizes that investment in education in education, training, and health generate productive capabilities in individual. This theory argues that individuals, firm, and societies benefit from these investments by increasing workforce skills, innovation and overall economic growth. Education is considered a key component of human capital development higher earnings and a greater opportunity for career advancement. Human capital theory highlights the correlations between education and economic success emphasizing the importance of

continuous learning and skill development. This is why Secondary Schools children should learn skills to enable them contribute to the economic growth and national development.

Concept of Educational Wastage

Educational Wastage involves addressing various aspects of inefficiency within the educational system. Educational wastage refers to the under utilization or inefficient use of educational resources, resulting in diminishing outcomes or opportunities has affirm educational wastage inefficient (Oyeyemi 2014). Educational wastage involves dropout rates. Students leaving school prematurely or with a significant loss of resources invested in their learning. According to a report by UNESCO, around 262 Million Children and youth were out of school globally in 2017 highlighting a substantial educational wastage due to dropouts. Moreover, the mismatch between education and employment is another facet of wastage.

When educational systems fails to equip students with relevant skills for the job underemployment. This gap between education and employability contributes to a waste of both human potential and financial investment in education. UNESCO, 2018). Furthermore, the inadequate utilization of infrastructure and educational facilities represent another form of wastage.

Under used classrooms, outdated equipment and inefficient allocation of resource management to combat such wastage. Additionally, societal disparities and inequalities contribute significantly to educational wastage. Factors such as poverty gender bias, and unequal access to quality education perpetuate a cycle of disadvantage, leading to wasted human potential and talent (UNESCO, 2018). In secondary schools in AkwaIbom State wastage manifest in several ways like premature withdrawal, repetition, dropout, death, truancy, mismatch curriculum, underutilization of resources, prolong academic programme, these have affected the acquisition of skills which children of this age group would have benefited in the schools rather, it make these children to roam on the street, do menial job, hawk , go for sells boy/girl, house boys/girls these have hindered their independency, productivity for survival even at the age that they would fend for themselves. The jobless are tend to criminality that is why we have many young people go into yahoo for quick riches. Unemployment of graduates overemphasizes on examinations, teacher burnout and lack of lifelong learning skill. Addressing these facets of educational wastage requires a comprehensive form that encompasses all the factors that cause the educational wastage.

CAUSAL FACTORS

Causal factors of wastage in educational system refers to the phenomenon where students drop out or fail to complete their education despite enrolling in schools.

Several Causal factors contribute to the issue among other are:

1. **Socio-economic Status**: Low-income families often struggle with financial constraints, leading students to abandon their education to support their families financially. According to world Bariks (World Development Report 2018: Learning to realize education's promise) poverty remains a prominent barrier to education globally, affecting `access and completion rates.

2. **Inadequate Infrastructure and Resources:** Inadequate Infrastructure and resources in educational institutional hinder effective learning. Schools lacking proper facilities, such as libraries, laboratories and well trained teachers, fail to engage, students optimally, impacting their motivation and learning outcomes.
   A study by the United Nations Educational Scientific and cultural Organization (UNESCO) highlights the correlations between resource allocation and educational quality ("Global Education Monitoring Report 2020").

3. **Norms and Cultural Beliefs**: Another critical aspect is societal norms and cultural beliefs that under value education, particularly for certain genders or marginalized groups.
   Discrimination and societal expectations often limit educational opportunities for girls, minorities or those from disadvantaged backgrounds research from the Human Rights watch and UNICEF underscores the impact of cultural norms on educational wastage especially in regions where gender disparities persist.

4. **Lack of Personalized Learning Experience:** The lack of personalized learning experiences and rigid academic structures contribute to student disengagement. Many students face challenges in conventional

classroom settings, due to varying learning styles and individual needs. The absence of tailored educational approaches may result in disinterest and disconnection from the learning process.

5. **Peer Influence:** Peer group influence, while often beneficial can contributes to educational wastage under certain circumstances.

Peer Pressure, distractions, and conformity within groups can lead to a lack of focus on academic goals, causing a negative impact on educational outcomes. Additionally, the desire to fit in might overshadow academic, priorities, leading to a disinterest in learning and a disregard for school responsibilities: A study by Crosnoe and Johnson (2011) highlight that peer influence can affect students' academic performance and aspirations. When surrounded by peers who prioritize non-academic activities or demonstrates disinterest in studies;

Individuals, might adapt similar attitudes, resulting in reduced motivation and efforts in educational pursuits.

6. **Unwanted Pregnancy:** Unwanted pregnancies among adolescents can lead to educational wastage due to various factors such as dropout rates, reduced educational attainment and social stigma unintended pregnancies during adolescence often have detrimental effects on education. Young parents, facing the challenges of parenthood, may find it difficult to continue their education. High school dropout rates tend to be higher among teenage mothers due to the responsibilities of childcare and financial constraints (Kane J. B. et al. 2013). This educational setback can limit their opportunities for future employment and success.

Control Measures of Wastage in Educational System

Controlling Education Wastage is crucial for effective resource utilization and ensuring every student has equal opportunities.

Here are ten control measures amongst others.

1. **Language of Communication:** A common language of instruction fosters inclusive learning environment, reducing language barriers that often lead to students disengagement or dropout, when students comprehend the language used in classrooms, they are more likely to actively participate in discussions follow instructions and understand course content. This linguistic alignment cultivates a sense of belonging and confidence among students diminishing the likelihood of teaching marginalized due to language differences on education.

2. **The Parents Teachers Association:** PTSs foster a conducive environment for parental involvement in their children's education. Actively engaging parents in school. Affairs allows for a deeper understanding of their children's educational wastage.

3. **Diversified Curriculum:** diversified curriculum accommodate various learning styles, interests, and abilities. By offering a spectrum of subjects, ranging from traditional academic discipline or technical skills, students can explore their passions and strengths, fostering a sense of relevance and motivation in their education. This personalized approach minimizes disengagement and disinterest reducing the likelihood of students leaving the educational system prematurely.

4. **Evaluation:** Measures such as formative assessment occurs throughout the learning process, providing ongoing feedback to both students and teachers. It helps identify individuals learning needs, adapt teaching strategies and create a more personalized educational experience. Through formative assessment, educators can address gaps in understanding promptly, reducing the likelihood of students falling behind and experiencing education wastage.

5. **Career Guidance:** Career guidance fosters skills development by emphasizing the acquisition of relevant. Competencies and qualifications necessary for chosen career paths. This proactive approach can help in reducing skill-related mismatches between what the workforce demands and what educational institutions offer, subsequently lowering dropout rates and under employment.

6. **Health Services:** A healthy student is more likely to excel academically. Access to quality healthcare, regular check-ups, and timely medical interventions contribute to maintaining students' physical well-being.

Healthy children are less prone to absenteeism due to illnesses, thereby reducing the number of missed school days and interruptions in their education wastage caused by health-related absenteeism, ensuring continuous learning.

7. **Follow-up Programme:** Follow-up mechanisms enable the tracking of student progress and identification of potential issues leading to wastage. Continuous assessment, regular evaluations, and timely feedback loops allow educators to pinpoint students at risk of falling behind or dropping out. This early identification is crucial as it permits timely interventions to address the underlying causes such as learning difficulties, socio-economic challenges, or lacks of engagement.

    Moreover**,** follow-up measures facilitate intervention strategies tailored to the specific needs of students. By understanding the root causes of educational wastage, educators and policy makers can design targeted interventions. These may include academic support programmes, counseling, services, provision of resources or personalized learning approaches. Such interventions aim to mitigate factors contributing to wastage and promote a conducive learning environment for all students.

8. **Innovative Teaching Skills:** Employing interactive teaching methods like project based learning, hyped classrooms, and attractive teaching captivates students' interest fostering active participation. This engagement reduced boredom and disinterest pivoted factors contributing to dropout rates. By integrating technology and real-world applications into lessons, educators establish relevance, making learning more compelling and retable.

    Additionally, fostering a supportive and inclusive classroom environment through innovative teaching practices fosters a sense of belonging among students. Cultivating collaborative learning experiences, peer teaching and mentorship programmes not only enhanced academic performance but also promote social interaction and emotional wellbeing reducing the inclination to abandon education.

9. **Effective Monitoring and Supervision:** Monitoring involves continuous assessment and evaluation of various educational facets, including attendance, academic progress, and teacher performance. Regular tracking of student attendance patterns and identification of early warning signs can aid in preventing dropouts. Moreover, monitoring academic progress helps in identifying struggling students who might require additional support, thereby reducing repetition rates. Supervision on the other hand, guidance, ensures teachers are equipped with the necessary tools, training and resources to deliver quality education. Supervisory efforts can also encompass classroom observations, providing constructive feedback to educators and fostering an environment conductive to learning, consequently minimizing under achievement.

10. **Implementation of Home grown Feeding Programme:** Home grown feeding programmes serves as a dual-purpose solution, addressing both nutritional needs and educational challenges, effectively contributing to the control of education wastage. HGPs focus on providing nutritious meals sourced locally to students.

    Adequate nutrition plays a pivoted role in a child cognitive development, concentration and overall health. By ensuring students receive nourishing meals these programmes directly impact their academic performance. Proper nutrition enhances cognitive abilities which in turn boost learning outcomes, attendances rates, and engagement within the educational system.

    HGFPs act as an incentive for attendance and enrollment for many families facing economic hardships, the provision of regular meals at school encourages them to send their children to class regularly. This does not only reduces absenteeism but also increase the likelihood of enrollment and continued participation in the education system, thereby reducing dropout rates.

Recommendations:

1. Addressing educational wastage requires a comprehensive approach involving policy reforms, targeted interventions and community engagement.
2. Enhancing Teachers: Teachers training programmes and ensuring equitable resources allocation are vital steps towards mitigating educational wastage.

3. Implementation of technological device by utilizing educational software and data analytics enables institutions to track students' progress, this will aid in making informed decision and implementing preventive measures to curtail wastage.

Conclussion

Adressing educational wastage require a comprehensive approache involving career guidance, effective monitoring, involment of parent teacher associatioin, language communication, implementation of home growm food, socioeconomic barriers updating curricular to meet work demand and enhancing teachers training programmes and ensuring equitable resource allocation are vital steps toward controlling educational watasge.

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