

Abstract

The paper discussed school pupils dropout syndrome in Nigeria, highlighting educational funding in developed countries in relation to UNICEF recommended benchmark of 26% of our national budget. Predictors of school pupils' dropout syndrome were grouped into three: demographic, performance and psychological factors. The effect of school pupils' dropout syndrome and solutions to the problems were enumerated. It was recommended that parents, teachers and the government have to work together to harness the potentials of this pupils for the development of Nigeria.

Introductions

Global trends are showing that it is not a country's natural resource endowment but quality of human resource that determines economic and technological development. Education is the process by which individuals acquire appropriate knowledge, skills, attitude, values and behaviour to function optimally as a citizen (Boonprasert, 2010). Nigeria must continue to invest in its education system especially at the basic education level, if it is to realize its vision of becoming one of the top economies by 20:20:20. It is only through education that the transformation agenda of the President can drive all sectors of socio-economic development towards actualization.

In 1990, Nigeria along with other 189 countries resolved to realize eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) which among other goals aimed at providing school age children with 'free and compulsory' primary education by 2015. Education for all (EFA)

monitor, reported that half of the world's out-of-school children live in just fifteen countries. In Nigeria about 8.6 million out of the world's 57 million children are out of school. This represents 5.2% of Nigeria's total population figure based on 2006 census figure of 165 million. Again, according to Mo Ibrahim's report 37% of out of school children are Nigerians which represents 9% in the world. Demographically, in the eastern part of Nigeria, it is boy-child drop-out syndrome that is prevalent for pursue of economic opportunities that predominates while in the northern part, it is girl-child drop-out for reasons ranging from cultural values which oppose female education to poverty.

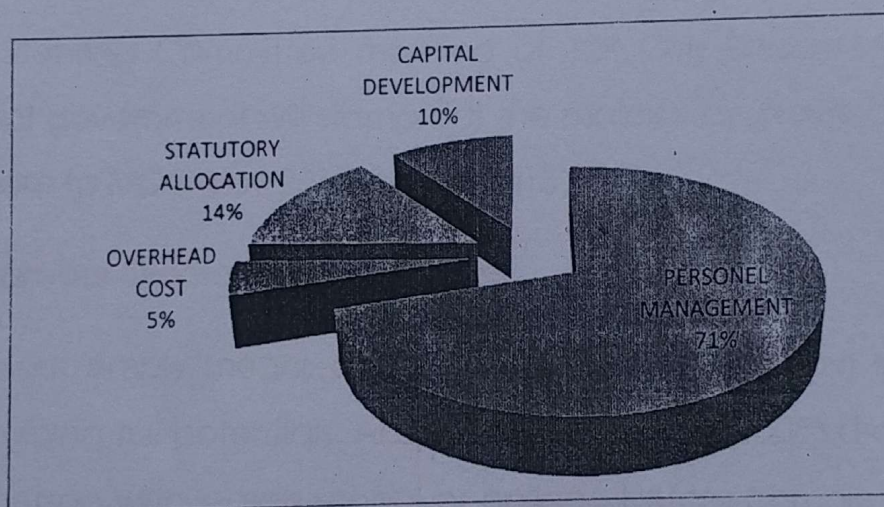
According to World Bank report, development indicators is that, developed nation is that country whose citizenry have greater attainment of higher education. For instance, Britain has 98% and United States of America has 89%. This among other indices informed the launching of Universal Basic education (UBE) Scheme in May 2000 (Nakapodia, 2010) to improve the education of the Nigeria child. To bring the educational attainment in proper perspective in Nigeria is to critical showcase government budgetary allocation to education sector. A cursory look at the 2014 appropriation Act alone reflects consistent trends in underfunding to education sector; it gives one the feeling that we are not in tandem with global reality. The allocation is N493, 458, 130, 268 Billion which is less than 10% of the National Budget (N4.962 trillion), falling short of the United Nations

Scientific, Educational and Cultural Organizations (UNICEF) recommendations of 26%.

Table 1: Appropriation to Federal Ministry of Education 2014

S/N	Main Envelop	Amount Appropriated
1.	PERSONAL MGT	N350,562,329,092
2.	OVERHEAD COST	N22,889,765,945
3.	STATUTORY TRANSFER	N70,470,000,000
4.	CAPITAL DEV FUND	N49,536,035,231
Total		N493,458,130,268

Figure 1: Pie Chart distribution of 2014 Appropriation Act.



Source: Budget Office, Abuja

This demographic distribution of 2014 appropriation act shows the allocation given to FME; sadly this among other factors is responsible for school pupil's drop-out syndrome in Nigeria today. The largest chunk (71%) of the budget goes to payment of wages, overhead cost 5%, and statutory allocation 14% and Capital development 10%. Schools infrastructures are in deplorable state and learning materials and laboratories are non existence and only 10% of the meagre budget is allocated for capital projects.

According to Redman (2013), Nigeria accounted for almost a fifth of the worlds out of school children. That the country's challenge is to get every child to school by understanding and acting on the multiple causes of exclusion and ensure they learn with qualified teachers in a healthy and safe environment.

The federal government has acknowledged the problem when the Minister of State for Education, Barrister Ezenwo Wike at a National Steering Committee meeting of 12th Girls Education (GE) vowed that government will stamp out the malaise by showing more commitment to MDG's by 2015 (Uche, 2013).

What is Drop-out Syndrome?

Drop-out simply means a pupil leaving the education system before attaining full potentials. According to Hornby (2008) drop-out means a person who leaves school or college before completion of studies. So, drop-out syndrome literally mean an undesirable pattern of school children withdrawal or quitting school before completion of basic education in Nigeria.

Predictors or Causes of School Pupils Drop-out Syndrome

School pupils at the risk of dropping out of school display certain identifiable characteristics which class teachers and school heads/managers must note. In this paper, I conveniently grouped them into demographic, psychological and performance factors:

1. **Demographic Factors:** these factors ranges from geographical region; - Parents socio-economic background; Physical deformation and challenge; sex; society's value system and beliefs; national insecurity, etc.
2. **Performance Factors:** these ranges from school academic difficulty and failure; poor attendance to school or class; long distance from school; school requirements like reading and writing materials; almost absence of monitoring on part of school heads/teachers/parents, etc.
3. **Psychological Factors:** these are complex issues that are greatly responsible for school pupils' drop-out that are hardly noticed or attended to. They include; child being held back (retention); teachers personality and lack of motivation; Early pregnancy; disease infection like HIV/AIDS and Kwashiorkor; loss of parents, etc.

Effects of School Pupils Drop-out Syndrome

It is not the child alone that suffers and pays the price of dropping out of the school. The effect is multifaceted on both economic and human development. It can be seen from:

1. High Poverty Level of the society. This can be appreciated from the large number of unskilled manpower taking menial jobs like riding Okada and Keke, etc.

2. Shortage of professionals and skilled manpower that will drive the engine of growth in science and technological fields.
3. National Insecurity as witnessed in global terrorism, hostage taking (kidnapping) for ransom, oil bunkering, ethno-religious fighting, maiming and destruction of properties, assassinations and rape, etc.
4. Loss of revenue from potential viable sector like agriculture; trades and craft; tourism and vacations, etc.
5. Incarceration of able bodied men and woman that would have contributed to national development.

What can we do as Remediation?

The most crucial issue is "what is the role of School Heads/Principals" or "the managerial approaches needed to be put in place towards solving the problem"? The paper will proffer the following measures to reduce this school drop-out problem. Of course, the success will greatly lie on School managers and teachers changing their attitude to work ethos. More importantly, we must all take responsibility and be committed to solving the problem through:

1. Programmatic Approach: this entails provision of supplemental services like extra coaching, separate facility for weak pupils, special education, etc.

2. Personal Recognition and Bonding Activities: this includes praising or reward, outings, recognition ceremonies, certification, positive home calls to parents for meeting goals, improving behaviour to increase self-esteem.
3. Intensive attendance monitoring: daily follow-up with parents to communicate personal interest.
4. Frequent teacher feedback to parents and school regarding pupils' comportment, undesirable behaviour, missed assignments/homework etc
5. Direct instruction and Modeling: this will increase desirable behaviour and reduce undesirable or inappropriate behaviour.
6. Integrating the pupils' home and school aspirations with that of the entire community/state or national interest.

Conclusion

From the foregoing discussions, we have been able to critically examine the impact of school pupils' drop-out syndrome particularly as it affects socio-economic, political, national security and technological development of Nigerian. Some solutions have also been proffered towards addressing the problems outlined. Teachers, parents, the community and government should put heads together to stem the tide of school pupils' drop-out syndrome in order to bring

out the potentials and talents of these children for Nigeria to harness its resources and meet the challenges of globalization.

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