

An Analysis of Dropout Rate among Secondary School Student in Delta State, Nigeria (1999-2005)

E.D. Nakpodia

*Department of Educational Administration and Policy Studies, Delta State University,
Abraka, Nigeria*

Telephone: 08033862036; E-mail: edwardnakpodia@yahoo.com

KEYWORDS Students. Left Out. Secondary Schools. Nigeria

ABSTRACT The focus of this study was to analyze the rate of dropout among secondary school students in Delta State between 1999-2005. Its objective was to establish the magnitude of occurrence. It was a survey study based on an ex-post facto design. Two research questions were raised and answered. The population of the study consisted of all the students enrolled into the 260 public secondary schools in Delta State who could not complete their course of study before leaving school. The sample of 120 students who were withdrawn from secondary schools were randomly selected from the 25 Local Government Areas of Delta State. The instrument used in gathering data comprised a structured questionnaire and checklist. Data were analyzed using frequency, statistical mean and percentages. It was found in the study that the students dropping out of school was a common phenomenon in all the State's secondary schools. The rate of dropouts was higher among male students than female students.

INTRODUCTION

A common feature observed in most developed nations is higher attainment in education than the developing nations. For instance, according to Egwunyenga et al. (2004) Britain had 98% education attainment, United State of America 89% while Nigeria and Sudan had 59% and 33% respectively as reported by the World Bank (1996) on development indicators. This properly inform the reason the Federal Government is seen to have priority attention to the supply of education in the first two levels (primary and secondary) as reflected in the launched Universal Basic Education (UBE) Scheme in May 2000.

However, it is uninteresting to observe that the government that has invested a large chunk of its limited resources to increase the supply of education especially at the secondary school level, allows any child who wants to dropout of school to do so at will. The National Policy on Education (2004) stated that the school system will be on the 6-3-3-4 plan. It opined that the system will be flexible enough to accommodate both formal and non-formal education and will allow leaving and coming back to the school system. This is because the curriculum is diversified to cater for those who wish to leave the school system at certain levels and those who wish to come back to school to complete their course of study. Hence, the rate at which second-

ary school students are observed to be leaving school at will to engage in diverse socio-economic activities calls for the review of the policy statement. This is with a view to saving scarce productive resources which would have been put into alternative use from being wasted on those who will not like to complete their school programmes. These are the school dropouts who this study intends to establish the rate, and magnitude of occurrence in secondary schools in Delta State between 1999-2005.

It is the opinion of most parents and school administrators that boys withdraw from school to go into buying and selling while the girls migrate into urban centers in search of daily bread. Nwadiani (1998) is not happy with parents whose preference to menial jobs brings quick monies to solve domestic problems.

It is also important to note that besides students dropping from the system, there are those who are observed to dropout within the system. These are students that willfully leave one public school and enter another or from one public school to a private school (Nwakobi 1990). What is not clear however is the rate, magnitude, and factors responsible for students dropout in the school system. The problem is on the rate and magnitude of dropout among secondary school students in Delta State and the factors responsible for this ugly trend in the school system. The study will therefore strive to find answers to the following questions to clarify the above issues.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions were raised that:

1. What is the rate of dropout in Delta State secondary school system between 1999-2005?
2. Is the rate of dropouts more among the male students than female students during the period?

Brief Review of Literature

Various literatures are to be reviewed as reported in the study it is obvious that there are many things about school attendance. First, many schools were open for only a few months every year. Even if children attended school everyday, they would spend far, far more time out of school than in it. Second, most children did not attend every day that school was open. Their parents have kept them out for a lot of reasons: they did not like the teacher or books, the weather was bad, or a parent wanted the child to help with work. According to Nwakobi (1980), one hundred years ago, many children worked in the same years as they went to school. There were no laws against children working dangerous jobs or many hours, as there is now in the U.S. There were laws that said children should be in school, but few paid attention to those laws. So many children worked a few weeks, went to school for a few weeks, and worked again.

In addition to having short years and going to school some days and not others, many children left school entirely to work when they were young. Today, most teenagers go to school until they are seventeen or eighteen. One hundred years ago, many seventeen and eighteen – year – olds were working, and fewer than one out of every ten children finished both elementary school and high school (Gausted 1991).

Many people then were upset, of course, that children left school. But since most children left school before they turned fifteen years old, it was not unusual for people to drop out of school. Few even used the word “dropout” one hundred years ago. School principals were more likely to call them “early school leavers” than “dropouts” Okeke (1990). Over the next fifty years though, things changed. Schools were in session longer. Children began attending more and more days that schools were open. And children had fewer chances to work as teenagers, so they stayed in school. As they stayed in school longer, more

children finished high school and got a diploma (a piece of paper that says you completed a program in school). As more students finished high school, finishing became more than a lucky event: it became expected.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: This is an experimental survey study based on an ex-post facto design.

The Population: The population of this study consist of all the students enrolled into the 260 public secondary school in Delta State, Nigeria as approved by the Ministry of Education but did not complete their studies before withdrawing from school.

Sample Size: A total of 120 dropouts from the public secondary schools in the state were sampled. The researcher obtained a sample of 120 dropouts randomly selected from the 17 local governments of Delta State. To get this sample for the study, a total of 150 questionnaires were given out to 150 school dropouts found in the market, motor parks and public places in the State. In order to ensure that relevant items were included in the questionnaire an extensive review of literature was done and the constructed questionnaire was given to experts in research to read and correct. The data collected were analysed using frequency counts and percentages.

Instrumentation: A constructed instrument was designed and designated as “RSDTQ” – Rate of students dropout questionnaire and a check list were administered to the sampled subjects. Out of the 150 questionnaire 120 of the instrument were returned and these were used for the data analysis. The instruments were structured questionnaire designed to accommodate 10 statements based on the profile of the respondents. A check list was also used to obtained data on enrolment and progression trends in the sample schools within the period under study. The likert – type scale technique was adopted for the scoring of the instrument. Respondents were free to agree or disagree with any statement on the questionnaire on a continuum ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree as follows:

Strongly Agree	4 points
Agree	3 points
Disagree	2 points
Strongly Disagree	1 point

The responses for each item were counted and scored. The instrument was validated by

experts in Educational Administration and Policy Studies and later tested for reliability through test and re-test method. This stood at 0.85.

Analysis of Data and Presentation of Results

The analysis of data was carried out by the use of descriptive statistics such as frequency and mean. These were used to find out the rate, magnitude and pattern of dropout between 1999 to 2005 for example the data on the rate of dropout was obtained by expressing the total number of those who failed to obtained the West African Certificate in the Final Year as percentage of the number of students that entered secondary class one at the junior secondary school at the beginning of the session.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

What is the rate of dropout in Delta State secondary schools between 1995-2005, the researcher made use of reconstructed cohort method. This analytical method entails the study of the indices of retention along the cohort route from grade to grade through a comparison of enrolment. It involved comparing the enrolments in the preceding and successive grades in a particular year. The observed differences in enrolment between the two grades implies wastage either in the form of repeater, dropouts or both.

The dropout rate between 1995 – 2005 was determined by the use of reconstructed cohort route method which entailed the study of indices of retention along the cohort route from grade through comparison of enrolment (preceding and successive grade in a particular year). The observed differences in enrolment between the two grades implied wastage either in the form of repeaters, dropout or both.

In table 1, the approach is essentially the net change in total enrolment from year to year. The analysis of the data in table 1 showed that the

enrolment from all the grades in 1999/2000 was one hundred and forty six thousand, six hundred and seventy one (146,671). Incidentally, the dropout rate the next year i.e. 2000/2001 show an increase with two thousand, three hundred and thirty six (2,336) students, of 1.6% thereby raising the years' enrolment to one hundred and forty nine thousand and seven (149,007) students.

In 2001/2002 academic session, the figure dropped to one hundred and forty six thousand, nine hundred and thirty five students. The dropout figure was two thousand and seventy two and the rate was 1.4%. In 2002/2003 academic session, the enrolment figure dropped significantly to one hundred and twenty four thousand, four hundred and ninety four students. The dropout rate shot up to 12.6% with a dropout figure of eighteen thousand, four hundred and sixty one (18,461) students in that year 2003/2004. The dropout rate was 4.1% with a figure of five thousand, three hundred and five (5,305) students, and enrolment rate of one hundred and twenty three thousand, one hundred and sixty-nine (123,169).

In 2004/2005 the enrolment figure further dropped to one hundred and fourteen thousand, eight hundred and eighty (114,880) students. With a dropout rate of eight thousand two hundred and five (3,289). This meant a dropout rate of 6.7% with a dropout figure of eight thousand, two hundred and eighty-nine students.

Research Question 2

Is the rate of dropout more among male students than the female students during the period under study? In answering the above research question, the researcher adopted the use of the reconstructed cohort method and applied it in analyzing the data collected from the 26 sampled secondary school in Delta State. The sample represents 10% of the entire secondary school population. The outcome of the analysis will be generalized to all the schools in Delta State.

Table 1: Dropout rate among secondary school students in Delta State, 1999-2005

Years	Enrolment	Dropout	Percentage
1999/2000	146671	-	-
2000/2001	149007	-2336	-1.6%
2001/2002	146935	2072	1.4%
2002/2003	12494	18461	12.6%

Table 2: Dropout rate according to sex

Sex	Enrolment	Dropout	Percentage
Male	1555658	4032	58.57
Female	136670	2851	41.42
Total	292328	6883	
2003/2004	123169	5305	4.1%
2004/2005	114880	8289	6.7%
Total	809156	34127	

Table 2 shows that male enrolment and dropout figures of 155658 and 4032 (58.57%) respectively were observed to be higher than that of the female students of 136670 and 2851 (41.42%) respectively. This means that there were one male dropouts than female in the period of study.

Also within the same period, two thousand, eight hundred and fifty one students dropped out from school and this accounted for 41.42% of the total number of student who did not complete their course of study.

DISCUSSION

The dropout rates in the secondary schools sampled between 1999 and 2000 were analyzed and presented in tables. the dropout rates were discussed in terms of the general dropout rates in the sampled secondary schools in Delta State, the perceived causative factors, and the comparison of the dropout rates by sex of students and location of schools.

The findings of this study revealed that students dropout was common in all secondary schools sampled in Delta State, and had a continuous increase from the beginning of the period of the study to the end. The findings agree with some earlier studies and researches across all educational levels, that of Adesina (1980) which recorded 31 to 75% dropout in Lagos State Schools in Nigeria; and Bayo (1981) which was 35.4% in defunct Bendel State of Nigeria.

In 1999/2000 academic session, the dropout rate was zero percent. This is because it was the base year. In the 2000/2001 session, the dropout rate as shown in the table was – 1.6%. This was because the enrolment of students in 2000/2001 was higher than that of 1999/2000 academic session by 2336 students. The excess may be due to admission of students at various levels of the secondary school system within the period. The dropout rate became obvious in 2001/2002 academic session with 1.4% and 12.6% in 2002/2003 academic sessions. Dropout was observed in all the levels of the secondary system within the period. But in 2003/2004 academic session, the dropout rate dropped to 4.1% and 6.7% in 1999/2000. This sudden increase in the enrolment figures between 1999 and 2001 and a consequent reduction in the rate of dropout may be attributed to the coming in to power of the democratic rule led by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. They came with

the promise of free and compulsory education for the first 9 years of the child in school i.e. 6 years in primary school and the first 3 years in secondary school. The fact that dropout was a common phenomenon in all the sampled secondary schools agree with some earlier students and researches across all educational level. Adssina (1980) reported that there was 31 to 75 percent dropout rate in the sixth year of primary school in Lagos State.

As a result, a solution must be made to arrest this ugly situation as students wastage lowers the efficiency of the education system. In the light of this, Nwadiani (1998) writing on the adverse effects of dropout on the Universal Primary Education in Nigeria stated that "...dropout will kill the scheme. Millions of naira will go down the drain when a teacher who is supposed to be teaching 30 pupils teachers only 10; when books bought for a class of 30 is locked up in a cupboard".

The researcher therefore, agreed with the opinion of Nwadiani (1998) who opined that it was unlikely that the wastage phenomenon will reduce in the nearest future in view of the socio-economic, ecology and internal dynamics of schools in Nigeria.

On the differential rates of dropout by sex, it was found that more boys enrolled into the secondary schools than the girls. This was shown by the total enrolment figures of the sexes during the period under study. The total male enrolment of the sampled schools within the period was 155658 (one hundred and fifty five thousand, six hundred and fifty-eight as against 136670) (one hundred and thirty six thousand, six hundred and seventy) females (girls) within the same period. The study also showed females (girls) within the same period. The information as contained in table 2 showed that 4032 (four thousand and thirty-two) boys dropped out of school as against 2851 (two thousand, eight hundred and fifty-one) girls dropped out of school within the same period. This also meant 58.57% dropout rate for boys as against 4.142% dropout rate for girls.

The information above contradicts UNESCO'S report by Brimer and Pauli (1971) which showed that in African countries from which dropout figures were taken, there were more dropouts among girls than among boys with significant difference at 5% level in rural areas and no significant difference in urban areas. Agreeing with the outcome of the study, that more males

(boys) dropped out of school than girls were Okeke (1990) and Ekperigin (1990).

In their separate studies and researches, Okeke found out that in the secondary schools in Onitsha Educational Zone in Anambra State that more male dropped out than the female students just as Yoloye discovered in Ibadan Primary Schools that high dropout rate were more among boys than the female pupils. Ekperigin (1990) discovered also that attrition rate was higher among boys than girls in the 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 junior secondary schools.

It can be deduced from this study that students' dropout from schools leads to wasteful utilization of scarce educational resources without achieving the nation's educational aspirations. This does not make for healthy educational system and will have negative effect on the economy of a state because those dropping out may create higher future cost by way of rehabilitating them either through "second chance" formal or non-formal education. Those who drop finally into society may become social threats.

In view of the above analysis, measures must be taken in order to reduce, if not to eliminate the dropout syndrome in Nigerian education system with particular attention to secondary schools.

CONCLUSION

Dropout among the students was a common phenomenon in all the secondary schools in Delta State but at varying degrees the dropout rate was higher among boys (Male) than girls (female). As such, the society-based dropout factors were discovered to have had the greatest influence on students' dropout of schools within the period. It is therefore recommended that:

- * The home is the foundation of the society. Parents should therefore, acknowledge this fact and ensure their families make meaningful contributions towards the building of a virile education for the nation. Thus, like the Japanese mothers, according to Nwadiani (1996) should be seriously and genuinely

committed to the education of their children.

- * There is need to radically improve the nations moral and ethical standards through a revaluation of the value system. Also the nation must de-emphasize materialism. In doing so, hard work must be positively rewarded and men who have distinguished themselves in their various professional callings including teachers should be adequately rewarded.
- * The government should regard the provision of educational facilities an utmost priority. Also there should be a better condition of service for teachers etc.

REFERENCES

- Adesina S 1980. The Wastage in Education: A case study of Lagos State Principal School. *West African Journal of Education* (Benin City), 1: 11-12.
- Brimer MA, Pauli L 1971. *Wastage in Education: A World Problem* Paris: UNESCO.
- Callaway AC 1981. *Dropout from Nigerian schools 1961-1971*. Ibadan: Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research No. 8.
- Egwunyenga EJ, Nwadiani Oyeabo 2004. An analysis of drop out rate among secondary school students in Abia State 1995 – 2000. *Journal of Educational Research and Development Abraka, Nigeria*, 3(1): 23-26.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria 2004. *National Policy on Education*. Lagos Nigeria: NERDC Press.
- Gaustad J 1991. *Identifying Potential Dropouts*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon Eugene Oregon
- Igbineweka VO 2000. *An Analysis of Students Wastage in Secondary Schools in Edo State, 1995-1999*. Ph.D Proposal, Unpublished. University of Benin.
- Nwakobi ND 1990. *An Analysis of the Trend and Causes of Dropout among Secondary School Students in Onitsha Local Government Area of Anambra State and the Environ*. M.Ed. Thesis, Unpublished. University of Benin.
- Okedara JT 1981. *A Preliminary Study of Primary School Withdrawals in the Wastage State of Nigeria (1955-1974)*. Ibadan: Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research Monograph Series, No. 9.
- United National Economic Commission for Africa 1994. Manual for the integration of population factors in Human Resources Development with particular reference to Educational sector planning. *African Population Studies Series*, No. 12, Addis Ababa.