



# Management of Public Secondary Education in Rivers State in a Dwindling Economy for Enhanced Students' Academic Performance

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## Abstract

This paper discussed the management of secondary education in a dwindling economy for enhanced students' academic performance. The study described a dwindling economy as an occurrence wherein an economy is in a state of financial turmoil, often the result of a period of negative activity based on the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rate. It is also seen as a period of temporary economic decline during which trade and industrial activities are reduced, generally identified by a fall in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in two successive quarters. The paper discussed Management as the utilization of physical and human resources to achieve organizational goals and strategies of managing secondary school in a dwindling economy such as effective school-community relationship, effective quality assurance, prudential leadership and alternative sourcing of revenue were discussed. This study highlighted some problems facing the management of secondary education as inadequate funding, low teacher morale, inadequate infrastructural facilities, lack of instructional materials, poor-school community relationship etc. The study suggested among other things, improvement of maintenance culture, partnership with Parents Teachers' Association, commercialization of school facilities, improvisation of instructional materials, provision of adequate infrastructural facilities and Periodic training programs for teachers as solutions to the management of secondary education in a dwindling economy. The paper therefore concluded that even in the midst of economic challenges, quality and functional education is still achievable. Hence, there is need to improve maintenance culture, improvise instructional materials, strengthen both the quality assurance units of the school and the school-community relationship and maintain prudence in managing both human and material resources that is imminently scarce in a dwindling economy.

**Keywords:** Management, Dwindling Economy, Students, Academic Achievement, Rivers State, Nigeria.

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## INTRODUCTION

The effective management of secondary education is critical to goal attainment and enhanced students' academic performance. It is only quality education which is enhanced through effective management that can sharpen the minds of the individual and help transform the society economically, socially and politically but management of secondary education in a depressed economy, especially in the developing economies such as Nigeria seems to be more challenging than thought. This is as a result of reduced funding from all 'quarters' due to incapacitated revenue generation. It is obvious that the management of educational resources requires funding. Nigeria has and is still experiencing the worst financial crisis for almost two decades. Output has been low, jobs have been lost and unemployment has heightened causing untold misery and pushing millions of people below the poverty line (Ayorinde, 2016).

Due to this setback, education in Nigeria which is the bedrock of national development has been grossly affected by this phenomenal economic decline both in quantity and quality. This is because the relationship between educational system and the nations cannot be overemphasized. The school system is a microcosm of the general macro-economy hence whatever happens in the system will definitely affect the schools. The school system cannot compromise standards and quality on the account of poor funding and the rising school population indicates the need for a proportionate annual increase in school enrolment and its consequent demands on the national economy. Since no economy can survive without human capital stock, all aspects of the school system must be up and doing to continue the production of manpower at all levels. Most institutions in Nigeria are confronting economic constraint and this slows down the pace of achieving the institutions activities (Peretomode & Peretomode, 2005).

The impact of economic crisis can be overwhelming not only on people's wellbeing, physical and mental health but also on school units. Nigeria is one of the countries that have been severely affected by the economic crisis, as unemployment, job insecurity, poverty; tax imposition, austerity measures, cuts in salaries and health expenditure are among the most visible and detrimental outcomes of the economic crisis (Awolere & Azeez, 2019). The expected funds from funding agencies, especially government, are often delayed and in most cases some of the funds are not released at all and this has negative impact on the effort of the institutional administration in execution of institution projects. Since the funding of education is exclusively external at lower levels, it is likely to be most affected with the economic hardship.

National Bureau of Economic Research (2016) defined recession as a significant decline in economic activity spread across the economy, lasting more than a few months. Economic recession implies the global economic forces that have placed the world economy, Nigeria inclusive, in a position of wrestling with her internal economic distortions. Its impact in the education sector could lead to poor quality service delivery, some of which are already lying belly up, owing to multi-faceted challenges. The provision of education to the Nigerian citizenry has adopted the social demand approach. This has contributed significantly to massive expansion of the Educational system without a corresponding increase in funding. The increasing budgetary allocation has always fallen short of the expected turnaround revolution in education in the area of economic growth, skilled manpower needed for development and equal educational opportunity for all (Nwankwo, 2013).

The recession is on in Nigeria with the addition of oil subsidy removal orchestrated by the present administration even though federal government through its monetary policies has made promises of a new dawn. There's no gainsaying to the fact that dwindling economic state

has led to high inflation and depreciation of school facilities for lack of maintenance due to gross diminished value of the naira to meet day to day administration of secondary schools. Regrettably, classrooms, ICT facilities, books and laboratory facilities provided to secondary schools seem to be in state of depreciation. Many schools have been able to cut their expenditures with minimal impact on students by deferring maintenance and construction projects, some schools have made cuts that affect students more directly. These cuts include: cutting subjects not required for graduation (stifling versatility), eliminating field trips, cutting professional development for teachers and staff.

Some schools have managed to trim personnel costs while minimizing teacher lay-offs by instituting leave of absence days, slashing salaries, and reducing other fringe benefits but the financial crises are still very clear like the biblical hand writing on the wall. In the years to come, more cuts will be necessary to ensure that limited or scarce resources are utilized effectively and efficiently to achieve desired result. School boards that evaluate possible cuts on the basis of research and data will be more likely to minimize the impact on students, at least in the short term. Some states view education as an investment in their economic future, so it is usually the last area to be cut. But today, many states have slashed their own budgets to the bone in public schools. Finally, rising costs, coupled with no substantial increase in funds, will challenge schools as never before in the face of economic recession in Nigeria.

In the school, educational facilities serve as pillars of support for effective teaching and learning thereby making the process meaningful and purposeful. School facilities include permanent and semi-permanent structures, such as machinery, laboratory equipment, the chalk/marker boards, human and financial resources, tools and other equipment as well as consumables. Educational facilities also refer to all movable and immovable materials which are used for teaching, learning and other school activities. The efficient management of school facilities brings about effective and conducive teaching and learning environment for teachers. In the same vein, the quality and standard of educational output depends on the extent to which school facilities are provided and managed. Educational curriculum cannot be sound and well operated with disgruntled school staff, poor and badly managed school facilities which include classroom, laboratories, workshops, libraries, equipment, consumables, electricity, water, visual and audio visual aids, tables, desks, chairs, playground, storage space and toilets.

Managing educational resources is a major challenge for school administrators especially in public schools with its continuous increase in student enrolment in a dwindling economy without a corresponding increase in school facilities. The management and achievement of quality education requires concerted effort, time, material resources, and good funding. Funds are needed to provide well qualified and better trained teachers, well equipped school, rich and relevant curriculum, up-to-date laboratories, libraries, instructional materials and a conducive environment that will promote effective teaching, learning. There are various stakeholders that contribute to the financing of education in Nigeria, i.e. parents, the communities, faith-based organizations, private sectors, donor agencies, and similar other play a very important role. The three – tiers of government shoulder much of the burden of financing education in Nigeria. Unfortunately, with the dwindling state of the economy, everything has become tough for Nigeria government. There is rising cost of all levels of education. Government alone cannot shoulder these responsibilities of education. Therefore there is need for us to think outside the box. It is against this background that the study focuses on managing public secondary education in a dwindling economy for enhanced students' academic performance.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theory of Dynamic Possibilities as proposed by David Teece, Gary Pisano and Army Sheun in their 1997 paper suggested that in order for organizations to be successful, they must be able to adapt and change in response to changes in their environment. This can be done by acquiring, integrating, and reconfiguring resources and capabilities. In the business world, the theory concerns itself with the development of strategies for senior managers of successful companies to adapt to radical discontinuous change, while maintaining minimum capability standards to ensure competitive survival.

The relevance of this theory to this paper is that in managing secondary education in a dwindling economy for improved students' academic performance, the school need to be able to adapt to the conditions orchestrated by the dwindling economy and the government inability to fund schools optimally and therefore generate other means of sourcing funds to meet the general needs of the students.

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

### **Management**

Management is the process of utilizing human and materials resources to achieve specified goals and objectives. Management is the utilization of physical and human resources to achieve organizational goals. The goal of management is optimization of the output and achievement of the organizational goals. Specifically, Obi (2004) described the goal of management in education in terms of planning, organizing, staffing, coordinating and directing the affairs of educational institution towards achieving educational objectives. Management is the effective articulation, harmonization and utilization of human, material and financial resources to achieve organizational goals. Robert-Okah (2014) opined that management is a process through which available resources are arranged and co-ordinated towards achieving the goals of the educational system. The resources available to the educational organization are both physical and human. The physical resources include equipment, chairs, finance and other facilities available to the school while human resources include student, teaching and non-teaching staff and head teacher/Principal of the school.

The arrangement and coordination process is concerned with identifying, maintaining, motivating, controlling and unifying formally and informally organized human and material resources within an integrated system in pursuance to achieving predetermined objectives (Ololube, 2017). On a broader perspective, administration could be seen as an integral part of any organization. It is crucial for maintaining and expanding the relevance, effectiveness and productivity of complex institutions such as government departments, prisons, school systems, universities among others. For example, the survival of all the organization, like the School and other institutions is dependent largely on the quality of administrative services available. School Administration therefore influences the results to be achieved, the direction to be pursued, and the priorities to be recognized within the organization, hence, Enaohwo (2003), agreed that administration is the process by which goals are achieved through collective and cooperative human effort in a suitable environment.

Abdulkareem (2011) defined educational administration as "essentially a service, activity or tool, through which the fundamental objectives of the educational process may be more fully

and efficiently realized". Educational Administration is therefore concerned with the utilization of adequate resources and the harmonization of relationships and interactions in a suitable environment, in order to foster the attainment of the goals of teaching and learning. Educational Administration involves prudent management of resources and high degree of accountability on the part of organizational members. Educational administration broadly means running of educational institutions, which involves guidance, leadership, and controlling of the efforts of individuals in the achievement of the goals of the institution. It also involves management of resources; human, material, and evaluation or appraising the result of educational efforts Abraham (2013) simply stated that administration is basically a term used in describing what the person at the helm of affairs does to achieve the goals of an organization. Adams (2007) as cited in Peretomode and Peretomode (2005) posited that administration is the capacity to coordinate many and often conflicting social energies in a single organization so adroitly that they shall operate as a unity.

To Sergiovanni et al. (1980) as cited in Peretomode and Peretomode (2005), administration is the process of working with and through others to efficiently accomplish organizational goals. Administration is considered by Nwankwo (1987) as cited in Peretomode and Peretomode (2005), as the careful and systematic arrangements and use of resources, situations and opportunities to achieve specific objectives of a given organization. From the above definitions, it can be deduced that administration is a top executive activity that entails implementation of pre-determined plans, policies and programmes determined by the management, for the achievement of organizational goals. The chief executive carries out this duty through his subordinates by coordinating, directing, manipulating and supervising them. He also ensures that the available scarce material and lean financial resources are efficiently distributed and utilized.

This concept is common to every organization; the only difference lies in its application. For instance, the principal or the school head applies it in a way to attain the goals of education, which include production of qualitative manpower needed for social, economic and technological development of the nation. The company manager applies it to accomplish his company's goal which may be a given target or profit maximization. The list is endless, so, administration cuts across all forms of organizations. Therefore, the practice of administration in a school setting or educational institution for the purpose of achieving the national goals of education and the specific objectives of the school can be referred to as educational administration.

### **Student Academic Performance**

The concept of students' academic performance refers to the extent to which a student has achieved their short or long-term educational goals or objectives (Ololube, 2006). It also refers to a holistic measurement of students' achievement across all subjects areas. Students' performance in secondary schools can be measured with varieties of benchmarks such as standardized assessment test, classroom performance, graduation rates homework, quizzes, termly examinations, essays, research projects, case study analysis, and oral performances. The present occurrence of economic crisis has brought untold difficulties on the academic achievement of students in so many areas. For example, adequate provision of infrastructure in the development of education cannot be guaranteed any longer; inadequate laboratory equipment

and instructional materials occasioned by high cost of laboratory materials have made the effective teaching of science subjects so difficult (Awolere et al., 2017).

In confirming the nexus between students' academic performance and the impact of the dwindling economy on the school system, Frankenberg, Smith and Thomas (2003) noted that the attitudes of school staff provide suggestive evidence on the impact of an economic crisis on school quality. In interviews of school principals in Indonesia in the crisis years of the 1990s, there were major concerns that school quality would decline because of falling monthly household contributions (particularly from secondary school level and the rising cost of paper, books, supplies, and photocopying. To prevent a decline in students' performance, there is some evidence that schools increase efficiency, i.e. doing more with existing resources and facilities, in the face of reduced government and household contributions. In Mexico, for example, it is argued that improvements in school-level efficiency helped maintain school quality and protect educational outcomes during its crisis years (Prawda & Psacharopoulos, 1993). There were similar responses by Indonesian schools, which responded to rising costs by relying more on writing on the blackboard and reading test questions instead of using printed materials (Filmer et al., 2001).

### ***Relationship between a Dwindling Economy and Students' Academic Performance***

A dwindling economy can have a negative impact on students' academic performance. This is because secondary schools exist at the mercy of several agencies such as the government, the Parent-teachers Association, the Host Community, Non-governmental organizations whose active roles may be hindered in the face of economic turmoil, families may not be able to afford educational resources, government may not be able to fund educational optimally and schools may have to make budgets cuts that affect things like teacher-to-student ratios and class sizes. This can lead to a decrease in the quality of education the students receive and may likely affect their expected performance. A study by Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2012), found out that when countries experience a recession, students tend to do worse on standardized tests like the programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). This is because families are more likely to face financial difficulties during a recession and this can lead to increased stress and anxiety for students. So there is definitely a link between economic conditions and academic performance.

### **Dwindling Economy**

Ekundayo (2017) opined that a depressed economy is usually associated with high unemployment, slowing gross domestic product (GDP) and high inflationary rate. These indices are presently being experienced in Nigeria. As economic depression affects governments' and parents incomes, it also affects children's welfare and education in general. The role of school administrators in helping to make a positive change cannot be overemphasized. A dwindling economy or economic recession is an occurrence wherein an economy is in a state of financial turmoil, often the result of a period of negative activity based on the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) usually accompanied by a significant rise in the unemployment rate. Nigeria as a country is plagued into economic recession owing to the irregularities of fund mismanagement and lack of good-will in prioritization of achieving the set objectives in the National Policy of Education. The concept dwindling economy which can be conterminously used as economic

recession expresses a heavy negative undertone in the opinion of many concerned scholars. The cause and solution of economic recession has been a great topic in their research works and discussions. Occasioned by the fall in the oil price, hike in dollar rate to naira has impacted negatively on the economy of Nigeria.

The National Bureau of Economic Research (2008) defined recession as a significant decline in economic activity spread across the economy, lasting more than a few months, normally visible in a rural gross domestic product (GDP), real income, employment, industrial production and wholesale-retail sales. Thus a recession is seen as a collapse in real GDP - it is envisaged as a general downturn in any economy. The major causes to economic recession are seen as poor economic planning, high inflation rate, high-interest rate, policy conflict and high taxation. Salaudeen et al. (2020) noted that a dwindling economy is an occurrence wherein an economy is in a state of financial turmoil, often the result of a period of negative activity based on the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rate. It is also defined as a period of temporary economic decline during which trade and industrial activities are reduced, generally identified by a fall in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in two successive quarters. This is usually occasioned by the fall in the oil price and increased rise of dollar to naira and alongside other factors which has impacted negatively on the economy of Nigeria.

Ayorinde (2016) revealed that the macro-economic environment has become non-conducive to investment in Nigeria and the capital market has witnessed low capacity output and policy initiative. President Tinubu's administration in a bid to ensure transparency and accountability in public fund and possibly to curb corruption and linkages through oil subsidy removal seems to have led the economy of Nigeria into a more disastrous dwindling state. Nigerian current economic situation has taken a toll on many families, individuals and institutions of learning. Noko (2016) stated that the International Momentary Fund (IMF) and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) have agreed that Nigeria economy has plunged into recession with low growth rate of 1.5 percent.

Economic depression simply means challenged or miserable economic experience during which every aspect of the economy witness down times in patronage and revenue generation. Economic depression is often interwoven with economic regression or economic crisis. According to Ololube (2017), economic crisis is experienced when there is widespread drop in spending as a result of financial crisis, external trade shock, adverse supply shock and decline consumption, investment, government spending and net export activities. In such period, intended investments in all aspects of the economy are compelled to shrink. This is partly because revenue generation sources are jeopardized. It is obvious in contraction of economic and business activities which limits patronage and revenue generation. Yenle (2017) noted that there is no certified definition of dwindling economy or recession, but there is a general understanding that the term refers to a period of decline in economic activity and considering the assumption of the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) on recession as 'a significant decline in economic activity spread across the economy, lasting more than a few months, normally visible in real GDP growth, real personal income, employment, industrial production, and wholesale-retail sales. A recession begins when the economy reaches a peak of activity and ends when the economy reaches its trough.'

Emmanuel (2016) cited in Yenle (2017) judges that Nigeria is experiencing economic recession currently, since her first and second quarters growth in 2016 are -0.36% and -1.5%". Benjamin (2017) also agreed that recession is a phase of economic cycle which occurs after two consecutive quarters of negative growth. This exhibits low output and investment, abnormal

increases in unemployment due to massive retrenchment, falls in the availability of credit facilities, fluctuation in exchange market (instability in exchange rate), illiquidity and downsizing and dismiss as well as reduced amount of trade and commerce. From the above, economic recession can simply mean *economic condense*. Ololube (2017) explored that a depressed economy is usually associated with high unemployment, slowing gross domestic product (GDP) and high inflationary rate. These indices are presently being experienced in Nigeria. As economic depression affects governments' and parents incomes, it also affects children's welfare and education in general. The role of the Head Teachers in helping to make a positive change cannot be overemphasized.

### **Indices of a Dwindled Economy**

- Downturn on the nation's Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
- Rise in unemployment
- Decline on economic output and consumer demand
- Stagnation of industrial production and retail sales
- Decline in consumer spending
- Slowing bank credit

### **General Objectives of Secondary Education in Nigeria**

The objectives of secondary education in Nigeria as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) include:

- Provide an increasing number of primary school pupils with the opportunity for education of a higher quality, irrespective of gender, or social, religious and ethnic background.
- Diversify its curriculum to cater for the differences in talents opportunities and roles possessed by or open to students after their secondary school course.
- Equip students to live effectively in our modern age of science and technology
- Develop and project Nigerian culture, art and language as well as the world's \cultural heritage
- Raise generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour and appreciate those values specified under our broad national aims and live as good citizen.
- Foster Nigerian Unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity.
- Inspire students with a desire for achievement and self-improvement both school and in later life (Obanya, 2002).



Table 1: Population Distribution of 10,120 Senior Secondary Schools Students in Rivers State

S/N	Local Govt. Area	No. of Schools	Population of students (SS2)	Sample of students (SS2)
1	Abua/Odual	11	440	209
2	Ahoada-East	12	480	218
3	Ahoada-West	13	520	226
4	Akuku-Toru	8	320	177
5	Andoni	10	400	200
6	Asari-Toru	8	320	177
7	Bonny	13	520	226
8	Degema	12	480	218
9	Eleme	6	240	150
10	Emohua	19	760	262
11	Etche	19	760	262
12	Gokana	12	480	218
13	Ikwerre	13	520	226
14	Khana	22	880	275
15	Obio/Akpor	16	640	246
16	Ogu/Bolo	3	120	92
17	Okrika	6	240	150
18	Omuma	3	120	92
19	Ogb/Egbema/Ndoni	15	600	240
20	Opobo/Nkoro	3	120	92
21	Oyibgo	4	160	114
22	Port Harcourt	15	600	240
23	Tai	10	400	200
	<b>Total</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>10,120</b>	<b>4,510</b>

Source: Rivers State Senior Secondary School Board (RSSSB, 2022)

Table 2: Budgetary Allocation to Education in Rivers State since 2014-2023

Year	Budget (N' Billion)	Educational Allocation in Billion	Percentage of Budget (%)
2014	485.52	45.153	9.3
2015	338	25.795	7.7
2016	307	19.341	6.3
2017	470	30.0	6.4
2018	510	50.0	9.8
2019	480.41	34.08	7.1
2020	530.813	49.471	9%
2021	448.6	30.466	6.7%
2022	483.1	32.844	6.8
2023	555.6	36.999	6.7

Source: <https://budgetpedia.ng>.

From Table 2 above, the 10 years comparative analysis of Rivers State Budgetary allocation on education has significantly been inconsistent and declining too. This further explains the issue of economic decline and why school administrators must top up their game in sourcing for fund outside government provisions.

### **Alternative Sources for Funding Secondary Education in a Dwindling Economy for enhanced Students' Academic Performance**

Funding is a vital element in any economic system and every nation regardless of its developmental level prepares an annual budget including that of education to encourage human capital development. Suffice it to say that secondary schools across Nigeria are funded by the government through the budgetary allocations but due to squeezed budget or the inadequacy and unavailability of this allocation from the state government, there is need for school administrators to engage in a worthwhile activities of income generation or make alternative arrangement on how to finance secondary education for enhanced student's academic performance. In view of this inadequacy, it is important for school administrators to explore the following alternative sources:

- **Parents' Teachers Association:** To raise extra fund in the face of a dwindling economy Schools can approach the PTA to raise fund and this will sustain strong relationship and progress between the management, staff, students, parents and community for a better learning outcomes.
- **Entrepreneurial Activities:** Schools should engage in entrepreneurial activities such as fishery, piggery, poultry, snailery to raise funds. Proceeds from School farms can be also be a great source of revenue.
- **Donations from Churches / Co-operative Societies:** Schools can solicit for funds from churches and other cooperative societies as an alternative to augment government funding.
- **Donations from Non-governmental Organizations:** There are countless number of NGOs in Nigeria aimed at reducing educational inequalities and supplementing government efforts in providing quality education by filling the gaps where there is lack of funding or infrastructure. In time of economic recession, schools can reach out to these organizations for funding or renovation of decayed infrastructure.
- **Host Communities' Sponsorships:** For school events, school administrators may approach local businesses to sponsor events such as Inter-house sports, Day of the African Child, Common-wealth day, Children's day, open days or community events, developing relationships with local businesses, may present opportunities where they can decide to offer mentoring or other services for free as part of their corporate social responsibility schemes.
- **Commercialization/ Leasing of school facilities:** Classrooms and halls can be used for events, clubs and night classes. Considering renting them out to groups and businesses when students are out of school can be a source of revenue generation to the school. Schools can work to get spaces listed in online venue search websites and work with local community businesses to advertise that these spaces are for hire. In events of schools within the rural areas, advert placement can be made in churches to inform locals of the availability of school fields and halls for rentage. Schools can equally rent parking

Spaces during holidays mostly in schools located in heavily-trafficked areas. On a similar note, sporting facilities go unused during evenings, weekends and throughout school holidays. Courts, pitches and other facilities can be hired out. This is also a positive way of engaging with your community.

- **Crowd Funding/ Extra-curricular Activities:** This involves seeking support from the school alumni who may organize annual conventions, conferences and dinners, lovers of education, philanthropists and the immediate environment for financial support.

### **Managing School and Community Relationship in a Dwindling Economy for enhanced Students' Academic Performance**

A school –community relationship creates a sense of belonging among students, teachers and parents. It increases students' learning opportunities while creating an inclusive learning environment:

- **Connecting with Host Communities:** School administrators can connect with the Host communities by taking part in community based- organizations such as creating a Rotary club which supports learning and children's' education.
- **Workshops with Community Organizations:** Establishing a community building activities where a guest speaker or a resource person can be picked from the community to interact with the students and share issues facing the school. This will give the students real life experience while building a strong bond between the school and the community.
- **Involvement of Alumni Groups:** Schools can involve Alumni groups who will serve as peer mentors and financial recourse.
- **Commercialization of School Farmlands:** Donate school farmlands to community natives for commercial purposes.
- **Special Recognition to Philanthropists:** Create more Sports houses and nickname them after some well-to-do members of the community. A strategic school administrator may launch an appeal to them for renovation of dilapidated infrastructures and crest their names on the wall thereafter.
- **Inviting Families to School Events:** school administrators can strengthen a symbiotic relationship with the host communities by inviting them to school events such as Annual Cultural Day Celebration, Inter-house Sports Competitions, Commonwealth Day celebrations, Day of the African Child etc. such invitation can be a platform for fundraising.

### **Ensuring Quality and Functional education through Quality Assurance in a dwindling Economy for enhanced Students' Academic Performance**

Quality assurance is a method used to ensure certain quality standards are fulfilled. In the school system, quality assurance is important to ensure that a school develops and performs in line with the curriculum and standards in place. Moreso, the provision of quality and functional education enables students to acquire skills and techniques which are ploughed into human productivity, creativity, competence, initiative, innovation and inventiveness. Attainment of quality education requires adequate manpower to match the growing school enrolments. It is the task of quality and functional education to address critical issues like the dignity of labour, quality leadership,

committed citizenship, industrial harmony, political stability, religious tolerance, self-reliance and security (Romina, 2013). This is in relation to the fact that citizen who are exposed to such education are well refined in cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects of learning. This makes them more balanced in taking up individual, business and societal responsibilities and where there is a breach of economic boom hampering on governments funding to all sectors of the economy including education, there's need to think outside the box to ensure quality and functional education. Therefore, education managers should hold firm on all factors that can propel and sustain quality education such as:

- Adequate supervision and implementation of education programmes
- Daily accreditation of teachers through the use of the time book
- Daily review of weekly topics by students at the Morning Assembly.
- Daily Submission of attendance register by students to the vice principal academics after school over.
- Weekly inspection of lesson notes and diaries by head of subjects.
- Syndicates to inspect classrooms during lessons.
- Special recognition to teachers who improvised teaching aids through local sources.

### **Prudential Leadership in a dwindling Economy for enhanced Students' Academic Performance**

- **Transformational:** A transformational school administrator inspires and motivates teachers through shared educational values. He also creates and innovates new administrative ways and adjustments to tackle the challenging repressive economy and ensure it has little or no effect on student's academics.
- **Accountability:** Being accountable prevents wastage of resources. A prudent school administrator will minimize wastage in a repressive economy when government funding is limited.
- **Empathy:** this requires a school administrator to be considerate and empathic. He puts himself in the shoes of his subordinates and creates a favourable atmosphere where they can thrive in the face of economic recession. This consideration will make teachers optimize their efforts towards service delivery.
- **Transactional:** A prudential school administrator may adopt the 'quid pro quo' (something for something) or transactional leadership style to make teachers step up in the discharge of their duties and have some take home allowances. A prudent school administrator can ensure the coverage of the curriculum by introducing extra lessons where teachers can be paid on per period basis.
- **Adaptability:** Being adaptable helps a school administrator better guide the teachers in the face of economic crisis
- **Strategic:** a strategic school head provides advice and encourages teachers, students and other stakeholders to work as a team to fulfill educational objectives.
- **Coercive:** Being coercive as a school administrator is required when placing strict boundaries on specific activities and reducing unprofessional behavior that may affect students' academic performance.
- **Cost –management:** A school administrator can reduce cost through curtailment of laboratory practical classes for alternative to practical, curtailment in the attendance of

academic workshops for teachers, limitations of field trips, printing at the back side of the paper to save cost, alternating between solar inverter, electricity and other sources of power.

### **Managing Schools in Rural Areas in a Dwindling Economy for enhanced students' Academic Performance**

Schools in rural areas are often faced with challenges such as inadequate number of teachers, teacher absenteeism, improper supervision of schools, poor infrastructural facilities and shortage of instructional materials and in the face of economic crisis, these challenges are heightened. In Rivers State, there are 253 public Secondary schools with over 200 sited in the rural areas. In the time of financial turmoil, the following strategies can be adopted in the management of schools:

- **Allocation of Free Farms to Teachers:** the prevalence of economic decline can affect the mobility of teacher to rural schools; it therefore becomes imperative for school managers to adopt this strategic approach to attract a mass exodus of teachers to rural schools.
- **Offer of gratis to local parents:** The school with a target to increase students' enrolment as a means of revenue generation can offer gratis to local parents with four or more children. This approach will attract an influx of students.
- **Partnership with Town Development Unions:** A symbiotic relationship can be established between the school and the Town Development Unions. Such rapport will offer a win-win opportunity where the school can relate its challenges to the Union body.
- **Leveraging on local resources:** This involves forging partnerships within the community, recruiting and retaining teachers from the community (PTA teachers) for school improvement and cultural connectivity.
- **Teachers' supervision by Local Communities:** This initiative is designed to enlist local community representatives to monitor the performance and regularity of teachers who may receive special allowances based on these evaluations. This will improve students' literacy and numeracy learning outcomes

### **Problems of Secondary Schools in a Dwindling Economy**

It is unfortunate that the educational system in Nigeria is not left out of the heat of the economic recession especially when government owned institutions are shielded under the guise of TSA (treasury single account), which leads to shortfalls in the payments of teachers' Salaries, and annual increment with accumulated promotion arrears for many years. Some of these features below have posed a problem to students' performance:

**Inadequate Funding:** Some of the provisions in the National policy on Education at the secondary school level could not be implemented because of lack of funds. For example, provision of technological facilities for a proper take-off of ICT as a compulsory subject has not, in the real sense of it, been provided by the government. Little impact has been made in the area of provision of instructional materials. Also economic recession has really affected the educational sector. This is because, money gotten from the economy is supposed to be channeled

to the development of the education, but owing to economic recession, the money needed in the educational sector is diverted to other sectors.

**Low Teachers Morale:** Absence of palliatives to cushion the effects of economic recession, Poor take-home pay, absence of allowances and absence of promotions are contributory elements to low morale of secondary school teachers. This must have accounted for the mass exodus of teachers moving away from Nigeria to other countries in search of greener pasture. Those who remain have to make both ends meet. So they do not put in their best. Many of them get involved in private practices, because they are not motivated, hence are not working towards serious implementation of the policy provisions.

**Population Explosion in School Enrollment:** Public Secondary Schools in Nigeria today have experienced a tsunamic explosion in enrollment due to mass exodus of students whose parents can no longer afford the exorbitant private school tuition fees and consequently resulted to insufficient classrooms, poor ventilated learning environment and a defilement of the 1:30 student –teacher ratio as stipulated in the National Policy on Education. These negative factors will undoubtedly affect students’ performance.

**Inadequate Educational Facilities:** Educational facilities are potent tools for quality education and one cannot overestimate its use in the everyday life of the academic (Okai, 2015). Educational resources are very essential aids for effective instruction. The rapid increase in school enrolment without a corresponding increase in the provision of educational facilities contribute to poor teaching which becomes noticeable in poor students performance in some cases.

**Migration and Mobility of Teachers:** Teacher migration has become an increasing feature of cross-border flows of highly skilled professional workers during economic recession. This will definitely lead to brain drain; it is very glaring today in Nigeria where teachers migrate to neighboring countries, United Kingdom in precision for better offered jobs. Ofoefuna (2010) noted that while schools in rural areas are under-populated with some classroom blocks lying empty, those in the urban areas are almost bursting with high student population. Many of them are running morning and afternoon shifts to cope with the problem. The facilities are over utilized and over stretched. Teachers prefer schools in the urban areas, since most of the schools are being provided with finance for maintenance and repairs by the P.T.A. The more the number of pupils, the more financially buoyant is the school.

**Absence of Capacity Building Programmes:** This is an area that has not been given attention by the government and school managers who owe the teachers duty to develop with knowledge and skills to respond positively to the ever changing phenomenon of education and to meet contemporary societal challenges.

**Insufficient Instructional Materials:** Lack of adequate quantity of instructional materials in schools as reported by Obi (2004), present great challenge to any creative and resourceful teacher. Ogwu (2004) opined that teaching within an economy of scarce resources challenges the ingenuity of the teacher. He further stressed that the teacher’s positive response to the challenge

is shown by the extent of improvisation made towards effective instruction rather than by complaining.

## **NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF PROLIFERATION OF SCHOOLS**

Nigeria is currently witnessing proliferation of schools, as federal, state, local governments, private individuals and organizations are exercising their constitutional rights in the establishment of schools (Sofoluwe, 2012). While the admission into secondary schools has rapidly increased, the volume of funds provided has not expanded to meet the enrolment demands. The result is an acute shortage of staff, funds, physical facilities and equipment.

### **Strategies to Manage Secondary Education in a Dwindling Economy for enhanced Students' Academic Performance**

In consideration of the countless of factors militating against effective secondary school administration to promote students' performance, some of these administrative strategies may be considered remedial:

**Partnering with P.T.A for Effective Sourcing and Management of school Finance:** The school administrators should be in partnership with the Parents Teacher Association (PTA) in running the school. Taiwo (1980) maintained that Parents Teachers Association (PTA) plays some significant roles in primary schools which include: Assisting in the provision and maintenance of school infrastructure. Provision of books and non-books materials for effective teaching and learning, paying regular visits to the schools to monitor students and teachers' performance, and co-operating with other stakeholders in education to provide quality education to students are some of the benefits a school can derive from its P.T.A. Employment of part-time teachers in subject areas lacking teachers and paying those teachers from the PTA account, Making donations to support school projects. The above roles of PTA if properly appreciated will enhance the quality of education which will reflect on students' performance.

**Staff Motivation using Palliatives:** The effects of a dwindling economy affects mostly the teachers due to the fact classes must be covered, students must be taught and the school system is a continuum. In the face of harsh economic situation, it is pertinent that palliative measures are taken by school administrators to ensure teachers are motivated to cushion the effects of the prevailing wave of hardship. Such palliative can be approval of leave of absence, increase in extra lesson fee, etc. It is undisputable that an organization's success lies in a motivated workforce. Employee's motivation, organizational performance, and profits are interconnected and cannot be separated. Generally, motivated teachers are more likely to motivate students to learn in the classroom, to ensure the implementation of educational reforms and feelings of satisfaction and fulfillment.

**Management of the School facilities to accommodate population explosion:** The management of academic and administrative affairs of schools traditionally falls within the purview of the principal. Unerringly, formal education in Nigeria is rapidly changing and technically tailored towards meeting certain set goals, such as "education for all" irrespective of the state of the economy (Ololube, 2017). Management of school facilities is a vital aspect of school

management. An effective and efficient management of school plant contributes tremendously to efficient instructional programmes as well as general development of education. Apart from protecting students from the sun, rain, heat and cold, the school buildings represent a learning environment which has a tremendous impact on the comfort, safety and performance of the students. Onwurah (2004) rightly noted that school plant is essential for effective learning and is often considered as teachers' tools. Given this onerous task, the principal, as a matter of fact, must understand the role of school managers to effectively manage not only staff but the facilities to meet the overall objectives of the school system, knowing full well that these facilities may not be provided or supplied regularly by the government considering the dwindling economy.

**Building a Tech-oriented Teachers:** Schools can create a room where teachers will not only deliver instructions traditionally but access online materials while also continually reviewing students' progress and meeting with students to make any needed changes. This can be achieved through the vehicle of digital technology/ devices which is the new trend today. With the advent of Artificial intelligence, the world today craves for digital teachers who could deliver instructions through the use of technology.

**Leverage on Grants / Loans to Provide Basic Infrastructural Facilities:** In providing Physical resources which are very essential aids for effective instruction, schools can leverage on grants and loans or partnership with local businesses. There is need to provide technological equipment, improving already existing facilities and updating the curriculum. The rapid increase in school enrolment without a corresponding increase in the provision of educational facilities contribute to poor teaching which becomes noticeable in poor students performance in some cases.

**Provision of Good working Condition against Brain Drain:** Creating a non-hostile atmosphere where the Basic needs and aspirations of the teachers will be met. Also, giving them choices and investing on them can increase satisfaction in an organization's processes and decisions. Employee engagement and belongingness lead to greater employee motivation and at the same time strengthen the organization. Moreover, staff participation in problem-solving and decision making can lead to increased productivity, improved attitudes, and decreased absenteeism, mobility and migration.

**Improvisation of Instructional Materials:** Improvisation is a feasible alternative to effective teaching and learning in schools in the face of dearth of necessary material resources and dwindling economy currently being experienced in Nigeria. Improvisation is aligned with the saying - "necessity is the mother of invention". A period of recession is when the teacher and his or her students should wear the improvisation garb (Uwa, 2016). Teachers who make efforts to improvise with locally-available materials in the delivery of their lessons should be recognized at the annual prize-giving ceremony. Consequently, whenever the need arises, the school administrator should encourage his teachers to produce their instructional materials instead of buying ready-made materials which has serious financial implication to the school. Improvisation of materials will not only improve the skill of the teacher and make him master of his subject, it will also increase the revenue base of the school since some of the materials



improvised for teaching could be sold to the public and the money accruing to the school could be diverted to other areas of need.

**Effective Sourcing to meet current demand of Proliferation of schools:** The fact that the various governments of the federation cannot adequately fund secondary education because of the dwindling economy implies that the institutions must be proactive, prudent, accountable and transparent in the management of funds been made available to them. The cardinal activities of financial prudence are budgeting, sourcing or raising funds, allocation of funds to relevant areas, school administrators are expected to raise funds through other sources to augment government efforts, because the success of educational institutions depends largely on the availability of adequate financial resources.

**Intensive Monitoring of Teachers:** To manage secondary education in a time of financial turmoil, heads of departments, the vice principals and principals should intensify their supervisory roles of the delivery of lessons by teachers through spot checks, sitting at the back of a class. The unpredictability of these spot checks will keep the teachers on their toes. More dedication to their work by teachers during a recession will translate into improvement in the process variables of teaching and learning and hence sustenance of standards.

**Improving maintenance culture:** In a dwindling economy, the current and next budgets have no such room for profligate maneuvering. The burettes in a chemistry lab, the computer in the Principal's office, the school's lawn mower, the paint on the school building and such other things that are traditionally replaced quickly will have to be maintained and to re-invigorate how these resources will be maintained. Teachers will have to be trained in basic preventive maintenance of then resources available to them. Students will have to be penalized for defacing walls or damaging school property. Monthly awards should be instituted for the cleanest class and annual awards to the school laboratory or workshop that is best maintained.

**Greater Use of Technology:** The time of recession is when you literally invade the space of the students and deliver academic content to them on Facebook and other social-networking sites. This strategy in improving the performance of students in subjects such as mathematics, English, biology, chemistry, physics and commerce.

**Recycling and Reusing of Resources to Save Cost:** In a dwindled economy, schools can recycle and reuse material resources such as printing back and front on A4 papers, putting off lights when not in use to conserve cost of electricity and alternating inverters and Generators.

## CONCLUSION

Dwindling economy is a reality. Its effects are alarming and dreadful. It is understandable that all sectors of the economy are affected during such experience. But report of this study gives prospect and affirmation that in the midst of economic challenges, quality and functional education is still achievable. Emphasis is on ensuring internal pragmatic synergy on how to improve internally generated revenue to complement government's efforts at making education worthwhile. It is to be known that no nation can develop beyond the development level of her education sector. Quality education remains a priority, no matter the economic status of the

society. Undoubtedly, lack of funds stands out as the number one problem in teaching and learning. In view of this, most public secondary schools are left with no option rather than to source for funds to maximize whatever has been given. This emphasizes the need for school managers to solicit for funds from other stakeholders such as alumni groups, host communities, NGOs, churches and cooperative societies. There is also a dire need to strengthen the quality assurance units, the school-community relationship and financial prudence in managing both human and material resources that is imminently scarce in a dwindling economy.

## Suggestions

Based on the study findings and in the bid to enhance students' academic performance in the face of dwindling economy, the following are hereby suggested:

- The principal as an administrator through the Ministry of Education should liaise with institutions, Parents – Teachers Association (PTA), NGOs and host communities to ensure adequate provision of funds are made available.
- In the face of recession, school managers should improve maintenance culture to ensure facilities are not over-utilized.
- School administrators should provide for more classrooms and other facilities to accommodate the population explosion that may hit the public secondary schools.
- Schools queue into the digital teacher platforms where teachers can be updated with digital skills to teach the 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.
- School managers should diversify revenue generation through entrepreneurial activities such as poultry, farming and leasing of school facilities.
- School managers should strengthen their internal Quality assurance to ensure quality and functional education is not compromised in the face of economic depression.
- School managers should access the vast resources provided by the internet where funds are limited for capacity building trainings and programmes.
- School administrators should ensure there is adequate improvisation of instructional materials to aid teaching since government may have hitches in providing them due to recession.
- Secondary school administrators/managers should encourage and ensure prudence, proper appropriation, transparency and accountability of funds from teachers and other personnel in the school.
- School managers should that ensures the school-community relationship is strengthened in the time of financial turmoil

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