



Principal's Strategies for Curbing Educational Deprivation in Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State

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Abstract

This study investigates Principal strategies for curbing education deprivation in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The population of the study was 276 principals of senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The study answers three (3) research questions and tested three (3) null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. A twenty five (25) items questionnaire was developed. Mean ratings and standard deviation was used to answer research questions while z-test was used to test the three (3) null hypotheses formulated. The overall reliability of the instrument was 0.83, the major findings of the study showed among others that Provision of functional libraries, school desks, games facilities games facilities, and free education as strategies for curbing educational deprivation in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The results of the study also revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principals in Urban and rural senior secondary schools on how provision of school plant facilities, free school meals, etc. enhance curbing educational deprivation of students in Rivers State. Based on these findings, the researcher recommended among others, provision of functional school plant facilities, and free school meal.

Keywords: Principals, Strategies, Curbing, Education, Deprivation, Senior, Secondary Schools, Rivers State.

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INTRODUCTION

The importance of education in bringing about human development cannot be overemphasized. This is because education embraces all process by which a person acquires knowledge and skills to live in the society. Education is a tool with which people, using the human ability to respond to, and interact with the environment, pass on from generation to generation those aspects of their culture and values which they consider to be worthwhile. It remains an undisputable fact that no society or nation can rise above its educational level. Thus, education is the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adults develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior which are positive values to the society which he lives. In other words, education is a process for transmitting culture in terms of contempt and growth and for disseminating knowledge either to ensure social control or to guarantee rational direction of the society or both.

Egbeta (2014) regarded education as an instrument for developing the nation and hidden talents in an individual. It is the only means of eliminating illiteracy in the society. Education is conceived as a preparation for life, a productive activity and an investment in human resources. Isife and Ogakwe (2012) affirmed that the importance of education in national development as a tool or weapon that can be used to eradicate ignorance, poverty and diseases to produce individuals that can function effectively in the society. It is the instrument that is used to force people from incapacitation and exclusion by influencing positive change in the behavior of people, which aim at making people to be more useful to themselves and the society at large.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2014) recognizes the importance of education generally and secondary education in particular in attaining her national objectives. According to the policy document, the five main national education goals in Nigeria are building of:

- a free and democratic society
- a just and egalitarian society
- a united, strong and self-reliant society
- a great and dynamic economy; and
- A land full of bright opportunities for all citizens (FRN, 2014, p. 2).

Consequently, the broad goals of post-basic and career development education (secondary education inclusive) in Nigeria are to:

- Provide holders of basic-education certificate and junior Arabic and Islamic Studies Certificate with opportunities for education of a higher level irrespective of gender, social status, religious or ethnic background;
- Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, dispositions, opportunities and future roles;
- Provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades;
- Provide entrepreneurial, technical and vocational job-specific skills for self-reliance, and for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development;
- Develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world's cultural heritage;
- Inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence.

- Foster patriotism, national unity and security education with emphasis on the common ties in spite of our diversity, and
- Raise morally upright and well-adjusted individuals who can think independently and rationally, respect the views and feelings of others and appreciate the dignity of labour (FRN; 2014, pp. 17-18).

Despite the above lofty goals of Post-basic Education and Career Development, which are embedded in senior secondary education, it serves as a transitory role from junior secondary school to higher education. Abdul, Mohammed and Faiz (2004) remarked that senior secondary school education is an important sub-sector of the entire education system. The authors noted that, it is a schooling designed for students with the ages of 12-16 years. They went further to say that senior secondary school is a stage of education that is dominated by students of adolescence age, the most crucial stage in one's personality development. However, some students are deprived of attending and attaining the goals of senior secondary education because poverty, inequality, sex discrimination, racial discrimination, tribal discrimination and the likes.

Deprivation, generally means denial, Chamber Dictionary (2009) sees deprivation as "to take or keep something away from them, to prevent them from using or enjoying it". Similarly, Black Law Dictionary (2009) sees deprivation as "an act of taking away, withholding of something, and state of being without something". Education deprivation therefore, may be seen as taking away the rights of students to attend school.

The above scenario persists in Nigeria. United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) Report (2018) revealed that one in every five of the World's Out-of-School drop-out is in Nigeria. The report also revealed that, even though primary education is officially free and compulsory, about 10.5 million of the country's children aged 5-14 years are not in school. Only 61 percent of 6-11 years old regularly attend primary school and only 35.6 percent of children aged 36-59 months receive early childhood education. This age, according to the UNICEF Report, is dropping as they proceeds to secondary schools due to factors such as poverty, ill-health, socio-cultural factors such as gender bases. Abok (2018) observed that the problem of education in Nigeria is not only about poor teaching methods and unqualified teachers and acute shortages of infrastructures and facilities but also gender issue impacts on children's academic outcomes and general wellbeing. He admitted that a child who is in poverty suffers high incidence of adverse physical, health, development delays, and emotional problems than that from more affluent homes. He observed in schools, adolescents and children living in poverty are more likely to repeat grades, to be expelled or suspended, to achieve low tests scores, or drop out of school.

On the basis of the objectives of ensuring that students are not deprived from attending and attaining education, there is the need to carry out a study on strategies for curbing education deprivation of students in senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study:

This study was aimed at investigating the strategies for curbing education deprivation of senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The specific objectives of this study are to:

- Determine the extent to which provision of school plant facilities enhance educational deprivation.

- Find out the extent to which provision of free school meal enhance curbing educational deprivation.
- Determine the extent to which provision of student support services enhance curbing educational deprivation.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

- To what extent does provision of school plant facilities enhance curbing educational deprivation in senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
- To what extent does provision of free school meals enhance curbing educational deprivation in senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
- To what extent does provision of student support services enhance curbing educational deprivation in senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals in urban and rural senior secondary schools on how provisions of school plant facilities enhance curbing educational deprivation of students.
- Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals in urban and rural senior secondary schools on how provisions of free school meals enhance curbing educational deprivation of students.
- Ho₃: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals in urban and rural senior secondary school on how provisions of student support service enhance curbing educational deprivation of students.

METHODS

The study adopted the descriptive research design. The population of this study was 276 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State while the total number of respondent's was 7,418. This comprised all the 7,142 teachers and the 276 principals in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. A sample size of 138 principals representing 50% of the total population was used as the sample size. The stratified random sampling technique was adopted for this study (urban 97 and rural 41 principals). Principal Strategies for Curbing Education Deprivation of Students' Questionnaire (PSCEDSQ) was used for data collection. This instrument was face validated by experts and the overall internal consistency reliability co-efficient index obtained through Cronbach alpha and was 0.83. Data were collected through direct delivery method by the researcher and three research assistants. Means, standard deviation and rank order were used to answer the three research questions while Z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

The results were presented in line with research questions and null hypotheses that guided the study as showed in the table below;

Research Question one: To what extent does provision of school plant facilities enhance curbing educational deprivation in senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of the ratings of the principals to the provision of school plant facilities to curb educational deprivation

S/N	ITEMS	Principals Urban (N= 97)			Principals Rural (N= 41)		
		\bar{X}	S.D	Remark	\bar{X}	S.D	Remark
1	Provision of adequate classroom can help curb educational deprivation.	3.3	0.92	Agreed	3.37	0.76	Agreed
2	Provision of functional libraries can help disadvantaged student to pick up quickly.	3.16	0.86	Agreed	3.05	0.82	Agreed
3	Provision of functional laboratory can help to curb educational deprivation.	3.44	0.66	Agreed	3.54	0.77	Agreed
4	Provision of functional school desks can help to curb educational deprivation.	3.48	0.61	Agreed	3.12	0.74	Agreed
5	Provision of games facilities can help to curb educational deprivation.	2.98	0.97	Agreed	3.34	0.81	Agreed
Overall		3.27	0.8	Agreed	3.28	0.78	Agreed

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of the ratings of principals in urban and rural areas on the extent provision of school plant facilities enhance curbing educational deprivation in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The Table showed that Principals in Urban area and rural area agreed on items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, with the mean scores of 3.3, 3.16, 3.44 3.48, and 2.98 respectively which are above the criterion mean of 2.50, while Principals in rural areas also agreed on all the items with the mean scores of 3.37, 3.05, 3.54, 3.12, and 3.34 respectively. this shows that Principals in Urban and rural areas in Public senior secondary schools agreed that Provision of adequate classroom can help curb educational deprivation, Provision of functional libraries can help disadvantaged student to pick up quickly., Provision of functional laboratory can help to curb educational deprivation., Provision of functional school desks can help to curb educational deprivation., and Provision of games facilities can help to curb educational deprivation.

The result revealed, the average mean score of principals in urban and rural areas are 3.27 (Urban) and 3.28 (Rural) which are above the criterion mean of 2.50; both principals in Urban and rural area agreed that all the items listed above are the extent on how the provision of school plant facilities can enhance curbing educational deprivation in senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Research Question 2: To what extent does provision of free school meals enhance curbing educational deprivation in senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of the ratings of the principals to the provision of free school meals to curb educational deprivation

S/N	ITEMS	Principals Urban (N= 97)			Principals Rural (N= 41)		
		\bar{X}	<i>S. D</i>	Remark	\bar{X}	<i>S. D</i>	Remark
6	Free school meal help improve the physical and cognitive development of the student.	3.29	0.85	Agreed	3.29	0.97	Agreed
7	Provision of free school meal can reduce family stress and improve educational and emotional development of the child.	3.44	0.82	Agreed	2.95	1.08	Agreed
8	The parental well-being and quality can be enhanced through provision of free school meals.	3.32	0.88	Agreed	3.02	0.84	Agreed
9	Only children from poor homes can benefit from free school meals.	3.25	0.81	Agreed	3.2	0.55	Agreed
10	Free school meal provision is a psychological antidote to hungry students with poor parental background.	3.19	1.01	Agreed	3.34	0.47	Agreed
Overall		3.3	0.87	Agreed	3.16	0.78	Agreed

Table 2 shows the Mean and standard deviation of principals in urban and rural areas on provision of free school meal as a curbing strategy for education in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The Table showed that Principals in Urban area agreed on all the items with the mean scores of 3.29, 3.44, 3.32, 3.25, and 3.19 respectively which are above the criterion mean of 2.50. this shows that principals in urban areas agreed that Free school meal help improve the physical and cognitive development of the student, Provision of free school meal can reduce family stress and improve educational and emotional development of the child, The parental well-being and quality can be enhanced through provision of free school meals, Only children from poor homes can benefit from free school meals and Free school meal provision is a psychological antidote to hungry students with poor parental background While Principals in Rural areas agreed on all the items with the mean scores of 3.29, 2.95, 3.02, 3.2, and 3.342.7, 2.93, and 2.8 respectively which are above the criterion mean of 2.50 . this shows that Principals in Rural areas agreed that that Free school meal help improve the physical and cognitive development of the student, Provision of free school meal can reduce family stress and improve educational and emotional development of the child, The parental well-being and quality can be enhanced through provision of free school meals, Only children from poor homes can benefit from free school meals and Free school meal provision is a psychological antidote to hungry students with poor parental background.

The result showed that the average mean score of principals in urban and rural areas are 3.3 (urban) and 3.16 (rural area) agreed that all the items listed above are the Provision of free school meal as a curbing strategy for education in senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question 3: To what extent does provision of student support services enhance curbing educational deprivation in senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of the ratings of the principals to the provision of student support services to curb educational deprivation

S/N	ITEMS	Principals Urban (N= 97)			Principals Rural (N= 41)		
		\bar{X}	S.D	Remark	\bar{X}	S.D	Remark
11	Provision of scholarship awards as a means of student support can help provide for the inadequate financial resources affecting student performance.	2.77	1.07	Agreed	3.15	1.12	Agreed
12	Provision of free books to students can help reduce poverty barriers.	2.63	0.98	Agreed	2.85	1.07	Agreed
13	Provision of free school buses can help a student who comes to school from a distance.	3.11	0.93	Agreed	2.71	1.09	Agreed
14	Student support service as incentive for student educational development and student motivation in learning.	3.04	0.72	Agreed	3.2	0.94	Agreed
15	Provision of free school intercom and communication facilities helps to motivates students desire to remain within the four walls of the school.	3.19	1.01	Agreed	3.44	0.63	Agreed
Overall		2.95	0.94	Agreed	3.07	0.97	Agreed

Table 3 shows the Mean and standard deviation of principals in urban and rural areas on provision of student support service as a curbing strategy for educational deprivation in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The Table showed that Principals in Urban area agreed on all the items with the mean scores of 2.77, 2.63, 3.11, 3.04, and 3.19 respectively which are above the criterion mean of 2.50. this shows that Principals in Urban areas agreed that Provision of scholarship awards as a means of student support can help provide for the inadequate financial resources affecting student performance, provision of free books to students can help reduce poverty barriers., provision of free school buses can help a student who comes to school from a distance, student support service as incentive for student educational development and student motivation in learning, and provision of free school intercom and communication facilities helps to motivates students desire to remain within the four walls of the school. While principals in rural areas agreed on all the items with the mean scores of 3.15, 2.85, 2.71, 3.2, and 3.44 respectively which are above the criterion mean of 2.50. This shows that principals in rural areas agreed that provision of scholarship awards as a means of student support can help provide for the inadequate financial resources affecting student performance, provision of free books to students can help reduce poverty barriers. Provision of free school buses can help a student who comes to school from a distance, Student support service as incentive for student educational development and student motivation in learning, and provision of free school intercom and

communication facilities helps to motivates students desire to remain within the four walls of the school.

The result revealed that the average mean score of principals in urban and rural areas are 2.95 (urban) and 3.07 (rural area) agreed that all the items listed above are Provision of student support service as a curbing strategy for educational deprivation in senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals in urban and rural senior secondary schools on how provisions of school plant facilities enhance curbing educational deprivation of students.

Table 4: z-test for significant difference between the mean ratings of principals in urban and rural senior secondary schools on how provisions of school plant facilities enhance curbing educational deprivation

Groups	N	\bar{x}	S.D	Df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Decision
Urban	97	3.27	0.8	136	-0.1	± 1.96	Not Significant
Rural	41	3.28	0.78				
N=	138						

Level of significance = 0.05

Source: Survey Data 2020:

Mean \bar{X} S.D: Standard Deviation

Table 4 shows the z- test analysis of the difference between the mean ratings of Urban and rural area Principals on how provisions of school plant facilities enhances curbing educational deprivation of students. It showed that Principals in Urban area have mean and standard deviation scores of 3.27 and 0.8 respectively while Principals in rural area have mean and standard deviation scores of 3.28 and 0.78 respectively. The calculated z-value, used in testing the hypothesis stood at -0.1, while the z-critical value stood at ± 1.96 using 136 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance, the calculated z-test value of -0.1, is less than z-critical value of ± 1.96 ; hence the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals in urban and rural senior secondary schools on how provisions of school plant facilities enhance curbing educational deprivation of students.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals in urban and rural senior secondary schools on how provisions of free school meals enhance curbing educational deprivation of students.

Table 5: z-test for significant difference between the mean ratings of principals in urban and rural senior secondary schools on how provisions of free school meals enhance curbing educational deprivation

Groups	N	\bar{x}	S.D	Df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Decision
Urban	97	3.3	0.87	136	0.9	± 1.96	Not Significant
Rural	41	3.16	0.78				

Table 5: shows z- test analysis of difference between the mean ratings of Urban and rural area Principals on how provisions of free school meals enhances curbing educational deprivation of students. It showed that Principals in Urban area have mean and standard deviation scores of 3.3 and 0.87 respectively while Principals in rural area have mean and standard deviation scores of 3.16 and 0.78 respectively. The calculated z-value, used in testing the hypothesis stood at 0.9, while the z-critical value stood at ± 1.96 using 136 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance, the calculated z-test value of 0.9, is less than z-critical value of ± 1.96 ; hence the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals in urban and rural senior secondary schools on how provisions of free school meals enhance curbing educational deprivation of students.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals in urban and rural senior secondary school on how provisions of student support service enhance curbing educational deprivation of students.

Table 6: z-test for significant difference between the mean ratings of principals in urban and rural senior secondary schools on how provisions of student support service enhance curbing educational deprivation

Groups	N	\bar{x}	S.D	Df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Decision
Urban	97	2.95	0.94	136	-0.7	± 1.96	Not Significant
Rural	41	3.07	0.97				
N=	138						

Table 6 shows z-test analysis of the difference between the mean ratings of Urban and rural area Principals on how provisions of student support service enhance curbing educational deprivation of students. It showed that Principals in Urban area have mean and standard deviation scores of 2.95 and 0.94 respectively while Principals in rural area have mean and standard deviation scores of 3.07 and 0.97 respectively. The calculated z-value, used in testing the hypothesis stood at -0.7 while the z-critical value stood at ± 1.96 using 136 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance, the calculated z-test value -0.7, is less than z-critical value of ± 1.96 ; hence the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals in urban and rural senior secondary schools on how provisions of free school meals enhance curbing educational deprivation of students.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study were discussed under the following subheadings:

Functional and Adequate School Plant Provision as a Curbing Strategy for Educational Disadvantage

The results on the functional and adequate school plant provision as a curbing strategy for educational disadvantage in senior secondary schools in Rivers State revealed that principals in Urban and rural areas in Public senior secondary schools agreed that Provision of adequate classroom can help curb educational deprivation, Provision of functional libraries can help disadvantaged student to pick up quickly., Provision of functional laboratory can help to curb educational deprivation., Provision of functional school desks can help to curb educational deprivation., and Provision of games facilities can help to curb educational deprivation in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This finding is in line with Dogman (2001), whose study revealed that provision of school plants will prompt in the academic processes of students.\

Provision of Free School Meal as a Curbing Strategy for Education

The results on the provision of free school meal as a curbing strategy for education in senior secondary schools in Rivers State revealed that Principals in Urban areas agreed that Free school meal help improve the physical and cognitive development of the student, Provision of free school meal can reduce family stress and improve educational and emotional development of the child, The parental well-being and quality can be enhanced through provision of free school meals, Only children from poor homes can benefit from free school meals and Free school meal provision is a psychological antidote to hungry students with poor parental background While Principals in Rural areas agreed that Free school meal help improve the physical and cognitive development of the student, Provision of free school meal can reduce family stress and improve educational and emotional development of the child, The parental well-being and quality can be enhanced through provision of free school meals, Only children from poor homes can benefit from free school meals and Free school meal provision is a psychological antidote to hungry students with poor parental background.

Provision of Student Support Service as a Curbing Strategy for Educational Deprivation

The results on the provision of student support service as a curbing strategy for educational deprivation in senior secondary schools in Rivers State revealed that Principals in Urban areas agreed that Provision of scholarship awards as a means of student support can help provide for the inadequate financial resources affecting student performance, Provision of free books to students can help reduce poverty barriers., Provision of free school buses can help a student who comes to school from a distance, Student support service as incentive for student educational development and student motivation in learning, and Provision of free school intercom and communication facilities helps to motivates students desire to remain within the four walls of the school. While Principals in Rural areas agreed Provision of scholarship awards as a means of student support can help provide for the inadequate financial resources affecting student performance, Provision of free books to students can help reduce poverty barriers., Provision of free school buses can help a student who comes to school from a distance, Student support service as incentive for student educational development and student motivation in learning, and Provision of free school intercom and communication facilities helps to motivates students desire to remain within the four walls of the school.

CONCLUSION

On account of the findings it was noted that Provision of school plant facilities enhances curbing educational deprivation. Provision of free school meal enhances curbing educational deprivation. Provision of student support services enhances curbing educational deprivation. There was no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals in urban and rural senior secondary schools on the extent provisions of school plant facilities enhance curbing educational deprivation of students. There was no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals in urban and rural senior secondary schools on the extent provisions of free school meals enhance curbing educational deprivation of students. There was no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals in urban and rural senior secondary school on the extent provisions of student support service enhance curbing educational deprivation of students.

Educational Implications

The findings of the study have contributed to knowledge creation in educational administration. The results of the study have provided empirical evidence of the level of low governmental intervention in providing functional and adequate school plant facilities, free education, special education programme and training, government should provide free school meal, and student support services in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study which have been revealed, the following recommendations were made:

- Government should provide school plant facilities to curb educational deprivation in senior secondary schools in Rivers state. The provision of the school plant could be by providing adequate classroom, functional libraries and laboratories, adequate school desks and functional game facilities.
- Government should provide free school meal to curb educational deprivation in senior secondary schools in Rivers state. The provision of free school meal will help to improve the physical and cognitive development of the student, it will help reduce family stress and improve educational and emotional development of the child, it will also serve as a psychological antidote to hungry students with poor parental background.
- Government should provide student support service to curb educational deprivation in senior secondary schools in Rivers state. The provision of student support service will help in providing free books to students can reduce poverty barriers, providing free school buses to help students who come to school from a distance; it will serve as incentive for student educational development and motivate students while learning.

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