
PERCEIVED CAUSES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL DROPOUT IN BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: This study examined the perceived causes of secondary school dropout in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design, which is a form of descriptive research. A random sample of 150 respondents including 50 parents, 50 teachers from 5 public secondary schools, and 50 known dropout students in the Yenagoa metropolis were drawn for the study and a 20-item structured questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.80 were used for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using statistical tool of frequency, mean and standard deviation. The findings were that parents' background, lack of physical infrastructures in schools, unexpected personal problems of students, and indiscipline, crime and drug abuse are the causes of students' secondary school dropout. This has negative effects on the socio-political and economic life of residents of the state, by dropouts contributing to increasing number of illiterates, criminals, unemployed, living in poverty, unhealthy, manual laborers, engaged in prostitution, drug selling, smuggling, robbery and general backwardness in the future educational development of the state. It was therefore recommended that government should make educational policies that will have broad financial sponsorship scope in order to avoid the negative socio-political and economic effects of dropouts on the society.

Keywords: *Bayelsa State; Nigeria; Perceived causes; Secondary school dropout*

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INTRODUCTION

Education brings development to both a nation and the individual. It is the means for eliminating illiteracy and exclusion in any society. Education is an instrument for the eradication of ignorance, poverty and diseases. It can be used to produce individuals that can function effectively in the society. Education engenders empowerment of the individual. Thus, significant investment in education of any country can translate to accelerated human and material development. Perhaps, this explains why education, especially primary education is considered to be a right to the individual and is legally guaranteed in most countries of the world (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2005).

Despite the lofty ideals of education, the issue of school dropout steer at the educational system at all levels. UNESCO (2012) report on global education suggested that there was an urgent need to address the high numbers of children leaving school before completing primary education. This is because findings of the global picture towards attainment of Universal Primary Education (UPE) indicates that about 31.2million primary school pupils in 2010 dropped out of school globally and may never return (UNESCO, 2011). While in 2011, 137 million children enrolled in primary school, but at least 34 million were likely to drop out of school before reaching their last grade, with sub-Saharan Africa, South and West Asia recording the highest rate of early school dropouts (Afisunlu, 2013). United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2017) statistics show that, though, primary school enrollment has increased in recent years, but net attendance is only about 70 per cent, but Nigeria still has 10.5 million out of 20 million out-of-school children in the world - the world's highest number. In

2014, the Institute for Statistics revised the 2010 estimates of out of school figures for Nigeria from 10.5 to 8.7 due to new population estimates. These figures remain the most recent as at January 2018 (Adewale, 2017; Okpi, 2018).

The researchers observed that one of the pressing issues facing the educational sector is the issue of secondary school dropout, particularly in Bayelsa State and generally in Nigeria. Notably, Yenagoa is the capital city of Bayelsa State. It became a state capital when the State was created in 1996. As a result, Yenagoa is a new urban center and the phenomenon of secondary school dropout is not an exemption, like the rest urban centers in Nigeria where in the major streets of big cities such as Lagos, Ibadan, Kaduna, Kano, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Abuja, etc. there are a lot of children who are supposed to be in school, selling on streets in traffics during school hours which is child labor (Faruata & Yumbak, 2013). This means that such children, who are supposed to be in school, rather engage in menial activities during school hours to support themselves and their families.

The researchers checked on the office of the Bayelsa State Education Management Information System with a view to obtain secondary school dropout figures, but discovered that there was the problem of lack of accurate and up-to-date data, except 2015/2016 academic session. Without monitoring dropout data for a given period of time in order to establish a trend, it becomes useless. It was also observed that, some of the students in secondary schools in Bayelsa State sometimes disappear for a year or two after their enrollment. Some of these students leave one school for another without any record from their former school and are admitted in to a new school and sometimes a new class or grade altogether by head teachers. Such students are sometimes wrongly deemed to have dropped out of school, thereby making it difficult for the authorities to obtain accurate dropout figures. Again, sometimes non-professional teachers such as confidential secretaries and political appointees that hijack the process of compiling vital data on the school system, thereby making avoidable

mistakes. Worst still, most states in Nigeria (Bayelsa State inclusive) gives false school enrollment figures, with fictitious dropout figures due to the thinking that the issue affects population indices, which are used for the purpose of revenue allocation and elections in the country. Notably, the issue of accurate population figures is often disputed in Nigeria.

This situation has created the atmosphere which has motivated the researchers to embark on research into the perceived causes of secondary school dropout in Bayelsa State, with a view to find possible solutions to curb or minimize the problem. The gap between this study and other related studies is that, nobody seems to have carried out a research on the perceived causes of secondary school dropout in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Therefore, the main research question of this study is; what are the perceived causes of secondary school dropout in Bayelsa State? Specifically, other research questions include: How does parent's background causes secondary school dropout in Bayelsa State? How does unexpected personal problems cause secondary school dropout in Bayelsa State? How does lack of physical infrastructure causes secondary school dropout in Bayelsa State? How does indiscipline/ crime and drug abuse causes secondary school dropout in Bayelsa State?

The main line of argument is that student's dropping out of secondary school is related to a number of causes such as individual, family, school, and society or community factors. The remaining parts of the paper is subdivided into conceptual analysis, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology, analysis of research questions and discussion of findings, and concluding remarks accordingly.

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Dropout simply means students withdrawing from school before graduation. It refers to any pupil or student who has not graduated from school, or was enrolled, but is not currently in full time state

approved education program. Almost all educational institutions in the world have their stipulated duration or tenure of schooling before graduation. Thus, any pupil or student who has been enrolled and is unable to complete before graduation is deemed to have been dropped out of school.

Hornby (2000) explained that "dropout of school is a process whereby a person leaves school before he completes the study". He went further to say that drop out of school is a situation by which a person rejects the ideas and way of behaving that are accepted by the rest of the society. Similarly, (UNESCO, 2011) suggested that school dropouts "refer to children who were enrolled in school but have left school before completion". Dropouts of school are those who could not complete a particular level of schooling. A school dropout is a learner who discontinues from school at any level of the educational process. These students who withdraw from school prematurely end up not obtaining any certificate of graduation (UNESCO, 2008).

The literature on school dropout established three main types of dropouts, namely cohort dropout, event dropout and status dropout. The cohort dropout utilizes the base year and determines the students who did not obtain a high school degree. Cohort dropout rates usually categorize the differences in dropout rates for particular groups of students. On the other hand, an event dropout refers to the student who leaves school before graduating. Similarly, status dropout describes the person of school age who has not been in school at the time of the survey. Status dropouts are often used to describe the portion of students who have dropped out of school before graduation. Due to the ambivalent nature of the dropout definitions, researchers often use quantitative measures and group students into categories to describe their status with respect to school completion (Drewry, 2007 cited in Rasmy, Selvadurai & Sulehan, 2017: 57).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The fact that the issue of school dropout is a global problem confronting the education sector around the world has been reported by researchers (Mohsin, Aslam & Bashir, 2004; De Cos 2005; UNESCO, 2005, 2011, 2012; Bridge-land, Dilulio & Morison, 2006; Oghuvbu, 2008). At the national level, the issue of school dropout in Nigeria has been recorded by researchers (Fafunwa, 1983; Ashimolowo, Aromolaran & Inegbedion, 2010; Ajaja, 2012; Apebende, 2013; Faruata & Yumbak, 2013; Okoji, 2013; Lekwa & Anyaogu, 2016; Akinbobola & Bada, 2018). Similarly, Fafunwa (1983) reported that school dropout is one of the most serious problems that have continued to bedevil the Nigerian educational system since independence in 1960. He noted that even before Nigeria gained independence, the problem of dropout has already established its grip on the educational system. This was attested to by the report commissioned by the colonial administration on the issue, which indicated that in the West Coast of Africa, a considerable proportion of students drop out of school each year (Nuffield Foundations, 1953).

Lekwa & Anyaogu (2016:15) observed that students' school dropout has become a serious problem in Nigeria, which has occasioned researchers to investigate the causes (Ashimolowo, Aromolaran & Inegbedion, 2010), effects on students (Mathias & Dada, 2013) and to proffer solutions to the menace (Hoyano & Keenam, 2007), and research findings have shown many factors such as hawking (Faruata & Yumbak, 2013), the nature of the learning environment (Ekanem, Apebende & Ekefre, 2008), child labor (Anumaka, 2012), socio-status of parents (Okoji, 2013) and family structure (Ikodiya, 2016), which can pull students out of school. Furthermore, studies have found that pupils who drop out of school often cite many factors across multiple categories and it is the complex interactions among such risk factors leading up to dropping out. Therefore, dropping out of school is often the result of a long process of disengagement that may begin in some cases even before a child enters school, and is often described as a

process, with factors building and compounding overtime (Hammond, Linton, Smink, and Drew, (2007).

Notably, dropping out of school is related to a variety of factors that can be classified into four categories, namely: individual, family, school, and community factors. For instance, school characteristics correlated with low dropout rates include a committed staff, a school-wide emphasis on academic pursuits, an orderly environment, low internal differentiation of program, and smaller school size (Bryk&Thum, 1989; Lawton, Leithwood, Batcher, Donaldson & Stewart, 1988). Increasing engagement of students by accommodating their needs may increase retention, but may also reduce academic achievement (Miller, Leinhardt, & Zigmond, 1988; Lawton, et al., 1988).

However, (Ajaja, 2012:145) averred that, studies have identified five major reasons why students dropout of school in the United States. These include; (i) classes not interesting, (ii) missed school for many days and could not cope again, (iii) spent a lot of time with those not interested in school, (iv) have absolute freedom to do what I like and (v) failing in school (National Center for Education Statistics, 1998; De Cos, 2005; Bridge-land, et al, 2006). However, researches on the causes of dropout in Nigeria isolated the following factors: (i) Poor educational background of parents, (ii) inability of parents to pay their children school fees, (iii) failure in school examination, (iv) very poor state of facilities in schools, (v) unemployment of graduates, (vi) broken homes, (vii) types of parents occupation, (viii) school discipline policies, (ix) teenage pregnancy, (x) early marriage and (xi) very early ambition for self-business and employment. He went further to state that the literature on dropout isolated six predictive factors for dropping out of high school, namely (a) grade retention (being held back to repeat a grade); (b) poor academic performance; (c) moves during high school; (d) high absenteeism; (e) misbehavior, and (f) the students feeling that no adult in the school cares about his or her welfare. Students with the above characteristics have very high tendency to drop out of school (Ajaja, 2012).

Lekwa, & Anyaogu (2016:15) revealed that Apel (2009) enumerated the adverse effects of school dropout when he said street hawking on students apart from denying children basic education, it exposes students to physical danger such as road accident, exposure to communicable diseases, environmental pollutants, poor academic performance, psychological problems like smoking, unwanted pregnancies, prostitution, low school enrolment and other vices. The high rate of indiscipline, drug abuse, prostitution and stealing going on in the society can be attributed to the biting effects of economic hardships on the students and their parents, (Crosson, 2008; Onwuzuluike, 2007; Hunt, 2008).

This social phenomenon has affected young people in Bayelsa State for decades and it has kept on increasing due to financial constraints of parents and guardians, despite efforts by successive governments to nip the canker in the bud (Utebor, 2017). It has created a wide room where some children engage in economic activities like commercial vehicle assistance, riding tricycle popularly known as 'keke' selling on streets and other social vices involving the dealing of drugs, increase in crime, burglary, armed robbery, cultism, blood money, engaging in prostitution and early marriages. Furthermore, those who drop out of school tends to have children who have less aspiration for education and in life as a whole. A student who failed to graduate from high school experiences a tremendous loss of income over a lifetime (Acquilano (2009).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Lawton (1994) reviewed literature materials, which were published between 1986 and mid-1994 and observed that there are many theories or models cited frequently on the literature on school dropout. According to him, the 'frustration self-esteem model' (Finn, 1988) postulates that students who did not do well become frustrated in school, as a result, their self-image declines, and a downward cycle develops that result in dropout. Again, the

'participation-identification model' (Finn, 1988) postulates that involvement in social activities result in identification with and social attraction to a group, on the contrary, a lack of participation results in a lack of identification. This implies that students who are marginal for various reasons (member of an ethno-cultural minority, a poor reader, a poor athlete) may become distant from main stream groups, become isolated, then alienated, and finally drop out. Tinto's model for postsecondary student attrition, which posits a similar mechanism emphasizing the student's motivation for remaining in school, was substantially confirmed (Norquist, 1993; Stage, 1989).

Similarly, the 'deviance theory', (LeCompte and Dworkin, 1991), holds that if individuals fail to support an institution's norms, even though they are not rebellious, they may be classed as deviants by the institutions and treated as such. Such persons may then redefine themselves in terms of deviant behavior, and drift toward activities that offer rewards that outweigh the burdens imposed by social constraints and institutional sanctions. Dropouts, who usually have a history of absenteeism, poor academic performance, and the like, may be treated as 'deviants' by schools and effectively 'pushed out'. LeCompte and Dworkin (1991) theorize about the link between structural strain on institutions and the behavior and attitudes of their employees and clients. Furthermore, the 'cost-benefit models' (Manski 1989; Bickel & Papagiannis, 1988) explains student retention/dropout. On their part, (Lawton et al., 1988) developed a grounded theory for dropout that emphasizes a number of themes in the lives of youth that guide the process of dropping out; school system, social and maturational themes may coincide to lead some students to a marginal place in the school and, ultimately, dropout.

However, this study adopted the 'Invitational Theory', which was developed by William Watson Purkey of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 1978, which is based on the idea that "students learn best when placed on the care of educators who invite them to see themselves as valuable and responsible, and to behave

accordingly" (Purkey and Novak, 1988). Invitational Theory (Purkey, 1978; Purkey & Novak, 1984, 1988, 1996; Purkey & Schmidt, 1987, 1990; Purkey & Siegel, 2013; Novak, Armstrong, & Browne, 2014) seeks to explain phenomena and provide a means of intentionally summoning people to realize their relatively boundless potential in all areas of worthwhile human endeavor. Its purpose is to address the entire global nature of human existence and opportunity, and to make life a more exciting, satisfying and enriching experience (Purkey & Novak, 2015).

The invitational education theory is a view of professional practice that addresses the total environment and all relationships formed in educational organizations. It is a process for communicating caring and appropriate messages intended to summon forth the realization of human potential as well as for identifying and changing those institutional and relational forces that defeat and destroy potentials. Having the ability to identify forces that destroy potential, the theory was used in this study to identify factors contributing to school dropout by checking the type of messages students receive from five components of the school environment (people, places, policies, processes, and programs) that influences their behavior leading to dropping out.

An invitation is simply a message that tells people that they are liked. These messages are the building blocks of community and of change. If teachers send messages that tell learners they don't like them, they undermine their best efforts to teach them and to retain them, with dropping out as the final outcome. Invitations can be formal or informal, verbal or nonverbal, intentional or unintentional. Educators need strive to be intentionally inviting and to make education a welcoming process (Purkey and Novak, 1988; 1996). According to (Purkey & Novak, 2015), there are five basic assumptions that are essential in understanding the Invitational Theory, namely:

- People are able, valuable, and responsible and should be treated accordingly.

- Educating should be a collaborative and cooperative activity.
- The process is the product in the making.
- People possess untapped potential in all areas of worthwhile human endeavor.
- This potential can best be realized by places, policies, programs, and processes specifically designed to invite development and by people who are intentionally inviting with themselves and others, personally and professionally.

The Invitational Theory is based on three interlocking foundations, namely: the democratic ethos, the perceptual tradition and self-concept theory. These foundations with each supported by decades of scholarly research and writing, provide Invitational Theory with substance and structure (Purkey& Novak, 2015).

Invitational Theory is unlike any other system reported in the professional literature in that it provides an overarching and encompassing framework for a variety of approaches and models that fit with its five basic elements. These assumptions give it purpose and direction, and take the form of a stance consisting of five elements: care, trust, respect, optimism, and intentionality (Purkey& Novak, 2015). The five factors comprise the school environment should be so intentionally inviting in order to create an environment in which each pupil is cordially summoned to develop intellectually, socially, physically, psychologically and spiritually.

The theory focuses on five domains that exist in practically every environment and that contribute to the success or failure of each individual that is applicable to the school environment. This is made up of five powerful Ps, namely; policies (inclusive, fair, equitable, tolerant, defensive, consistent and just), processes (academic, interdisciplinary, encouraging, democratic, cooperative, collaborative and evaluative), people (trusting, respectful, optimistic, caring, accessible, courteous and intentional), places (functional, attractive,

clean, efficient, aesthetic, personal and warm) and programs (enriching, stimulating, healthy, intellectual, constructive, developmental and engaging) ((Purkey& Novak, 2015). Invitational education suggests some practical strategies for making schools the most inviting place (Maaka & Lipka, 1996; Tewel, 1997).

Also, Invitational Theory identifies levels of functioning. Being human and less than perfect, everyone functions at each level from time to time, but it is the level at which people typically function that determines their approach to life and their ultimate success in personal and professional living. These are: the plus factor; intentionally disinventing; unintentionally disinventing; unintentionally inviting; and intentionally inviting.

In addition, the goal of Invitational Theory is to encourage individuals to enrich their lives in each of the four basic dimensions: (1) being personally inviting with oneself; (2) being personally inviting with others; (3) being professionally inviting with oneself; and (4) being professionally inviting with others (Purkey& Novak, 2015). Teachers are in a helping profession and good teachers feel good about themselves, and they feel good about others. Therefore, an intentionally inviting school environment impact pupils positively and most likely to prevent pupils' dropping out. When invitational education functions well, students are motivated to work harder and to meet a teacher's high standards(Purkey& Novak, 1988).

The invitational education theory was helpful to this study in the sense that it creates a school environment, which sends caring signals or messages to pupils that they are liked by preventing them from dropping out. The theory is critical to the creation of an intentionally inviting school environment in which learners are given the opportunity to work freely, which in turn helps them perceive school in much more positive ways that are helpful in preventing dropping out. Sometimes pupils come to school already exposed to risk factors leading to dropout such as family factors, community factors and individual factors, the

school factors compound the existing risk factors making dropping out most likely. The invitational education theory promotes creation of inviting school environments in which pupils feel liked, welcome and free to express themselves as they feel working among friends (Cleor& Alexander, 1992).

METHODOLOGY

This describes the research design, sources of data, population of study, sample and sampling techniques, instrumentation, validation of instrument and reliability, the design and the administration of the instrument, and methods of data presentation and analysis.

Research Design

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design, which is a form of descriptive research which is suitable particularly when respondents required to address the research problem are drawn from a cross-section of units. The respondents in this specific study were drawn from a cross-section of parents and teachers of selected public secondary schools and some known secondary school dropout students in Yenagoa metropolis of Bayelsa State.

Sources of Data

There are basically two sources of data, namely the primary and secondary sources of data and to get the best out of this research study, the two sources of data collection methods were adopted. The primary data is the collection of first-hand information gotten from the field by the researchers, while the secondary sources of data collection were the information obtained from textbooks, journals, newspapers, magazines, reports, and verbal interviews, etc.

Population of the Study, Sample and Sampling Technique

There are 380 public secondary (senior and junior) schools, 3,746 teachers and 107,207 students in Bayelsa State in the 2015/2016 academic session. However, there is no data on the total number of parents (PTA members) in Bayelsa State. This is because there is no state

wide Parent Teachers Association (PTA) where such data would have been collated, which made us to rely on the conjunction that the total number of parents would be less than the total number of students, considering the fact that some parents may have more than one child/ward in school at a given point in time. Therefore, the accessible population constituted all the teachers, parents, enrolled students and known dropout students in Bayelsa State.

The sample of study consists of 150 respondents, which were made up of 50 parents randomly selected from the PTAs of five public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, 50 teachers also randomly selected from the five public schools and 50 known dropout students in Yenagoa metropolis were randomly selected and sampled in the study. The Cat & Hat method was used to select the respondents. The researchers used even numbers; 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 folded in a container for the respondents to pick. The ones that picked either of the numbers were selected as respondents.

Instrumentation

The instrument for collecting data for the study was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Perceived Causes of Secondary School Dropout Questionnaire" (PCOSSDQ) was divided into two parts. The first part contained the respondent's personal data, while the second part contained the research questions. The second part was sub-divided into (A, B, C and D) to tackle each of the research questions. The responses to the questions were rated with a four-point scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD).

Validation of the Instrument and Reliability

This instrument was validated by the researchers. The corrections were used to modify the questionnaire that was used to collect data for the study. The test re-test technique was used to determine the reliability of the instrument for this study. This was done by administering the instrument to a sample of 50 parents, 50 teachers and 50 known dropout students within a space of two weeks in separate occasions. The

data obtained was analyzed using Pearson Product Movement Correlation Co-efficient. The value obtained of the reliability co-efficient was 0.80 which is highly significant. Based on that, the instrument was considered reliable.

Administration of Data

The questionnaire being an instrument of data collection was personally distributed to the respondents comprising of parents, school dropout students and teachers. The researchers engaged the respondents on separate occasions, parents and teachers were administered the questionnaires during PTA meets scheduled differently in the selected schools, while the known dropout students were engaged in one location with the use of short media service (sms) was used as a means of notification which they all turned out on the agreed date, time and venue. The researchers retrieved the questionnaires on the spot in order to avoid the loss of any of them. Each category of respondents was visited on a scheduled date agreed upon between the researchers and each group of the respondents.

Methods of Data Presentation and Analysis

The data obtained was carefully analyzed using the statistical tool of frequency, simple percentage and mean methods expressed in tables. The researchers used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), 23.0 version as well as Microsoft Word 17 version in the analysis of data. The SPSS enabled the researchers to enter data and also define the variables through the data view as well as variable view. The methods were adopted by the researchers because it is easy to understand and calculate. Mean response of 2.50 was considered as the cut-off point. In other words, mean response of 2.50 and above were accepted, while mean response below 2.50 were rejected.

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research Question One: How does parent's background causes of students' school dropout in Bayelsa State?

Table 1: Responses of parent's background causes students' school dropout

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD	Decision
Broken home is a cause of students' school dropout	100	40	6	4	3.6	.69848	Agreed
Low-income of parents causes students' School dropout	85	50	10	5	3.8	.76340	Agreed
The death of parents and guidance causes students' school dropout	120	25	3	2	3.9	.96702	Agreed
Poverty in the family causes students' school dropout	80	45	10	15	3.6	.55486	Agreed
relocation of parents/guidance causes students' school dropout	70	45	15	20	3.4	1.04753	Agreed
Grand Mean					3.6		Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2018 N = 150 cut-off point = 2.5

The result in table 1 above indicated that for question items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 with mean response score of 3.6, 3.8, 3.9, 3.6 and 3.4 respectively, which is greater than the median score of 2.5. Also, with a grand mean of 3.6 which is greater than the cut-off point of 2.5, is an indication that it was the general opinion of the respondents that broken homes, low income of parents, sudden deaths of parents/guidance, poverty in the family, relocation of parents/guidance are causes of students' secondary school dropout in Bayelsa State.

From analysis of table 1, it was revealed that parent's background causes dropout among secondary school students in Bayelsa State, which include but not limited to death of parents/guardians, parents low income status, broken homes or divorce, parents relocation, and poverty in the family. The findings reveals that most students drop out of school due to broken homes where their mothers are separated from their fathers in form of divorce, or separation, therefore, they leave school as a result of instability in the new homes. Furthermore, some students are said to have dropped out of school because their parents and guidance fall sick in the process of their schooling, thereby, forcing them out of school to enable them take care of their sick parents/guardians. Parent's relocation from one community to another

also is a major reason why students drop out of school. Some of the cases the researchers encountered in Yenagoa metropolis were that, some parents/guidance due to reasons such as transfer of service, retirements, and new jobs among others left the community along with their children/wards who as of then were registered in schools within the state capital.

The study also reveal that school dropout is caused by parent’s low income as a result of poverty, which interacts with other points of social disadvantage with the interaction of factors putting further pressure on vulnerable and marginalized children to drop out of school. Therefore, succinctly poverty has become the largest factor which causes school dropout, which most times is been triggered by parents low-income status, unpaid salaries and arrears, unemployment status of parent, and sometimes, lack of entrepreneurship ideas and skills of parents. This however has created the atmosphere, where most poor parents could not afford school fees, books and uniforms as well as other basic needs necessary to send their children to school (Hunt, Sabates& Akyeampong, 2008; Hunt, 2008; De Cos, 2005; Ogbuvbu, 2008).

Research Question Two: How does unexpected personal problems cause secondary school dropout in Bayelsa State?

Table 2: Responses of unexpected personal problems cause school dropout

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD	Decision
Teenage pregnancy causes students’ school dropout	90	30	20	10	3.3	.94597	Agreed
Accident causes students’ school dropout	30	105	5	10	3.0	.87789	Agreed
Sudden sickness causes students school Dropout	85	45	10	10	3.4	.71306	Agreed
Parents/loved ones illness causes Students’ school dropout	100	40	8	2	3.6	.65729	Agreed
Student sudden rustication as a result of misconduct causes students’ school dropout	45	95	2	8	3.2	.70540	Agreed
Grand Mean					3.4		Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2018 N = 150 cut-off point = 2.5

The mean response score from table 2 above for item 6 was 3.3; item 7, 3.0; item 8, 3.4, item 9, 3.6 and item 10, 3.2. All the mean response scores were greater than the median score of 2.5. On the other hand, the grand mean of 3.3 was also greater than the cut-off point of 2.5, thus, it was the general opinion of the respondents that unexpected personal problems causes secondary school dropout in Bayelsa state. The findings show that teenage pregnancy, road or domestic accidents, sudden sickness of students, illness of parents/loved ones, and rustication of students as a result of misconducts causes students dropout in Bayelsa State.

The results of findings are in tandem with the reports of (Cains, Cains, & Neckerman, 1989; Hunt, 2008; UNESCO, 2006, 2010). Researches have shown that teenage pregnancy is one of the important sources of school dropout among teenagers, especially for the girl child. Also, research had shown that girls who mostly become pregnant dropped out of school because they have to care for the new born child (Hunt, 2008). Times like this, teenagers in such situation are labeled or tagged and are laughed at by their peers. They will be hooting at them and therefore, become discouraged and often absent themselves from school and subsequently dropout of school. On the other hand, the boys who bear the responsibility for the pregnancy also face some consequences when they are in school (UNESCO, 2006, 2010). In this study, it was found that the girls who were pregnant were overage for their grade level. There is therefore the need to encourage early enrolment particularly for girls. The older the child is the more the pressures and demands to take responsibility to contribute to the welfare of the family through work increasing the likelihood of dropping out of school (Cain, 1977; UNESCO, 2006, 2010).

Furthermore, some students were forced to drop out of school unexpectedly due to accidents which can be domestic or road. Some fell into incurable diseases like HIV/AIDS and other forms of sicknesses that force them to leave unexpectedly, some died in the process, some has to leave school to take care of their ill parents/guidance, while others were

ask to dropout by rustication due to misconduct (Ampiah&Adu-Yeboah, 2009; Lehr, Johnson, Bremer, Cosio& Thompson, 2004).

Research Question Three: How does lack of physical infrastructure causes secondary school dropout in Bayelsa State?

Table 3: Responses on lack of physical infrastructure causes school dropout

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD	Decision
Overcrowded classroom settings causes to students' secondary school dropout	110	25	10	5	3.6	.75972	Agreed
Uncomfortable chairs and desks causes students' school dropout	125	20	2	3	3.8	.54428	Agreed
Inadequate instructional materials causes students' secondary school dropout	35	110	1	4	3.2	.56604	Agreed
Inadequate classroom blocks causes students' secondary school dropout	50	90	6	4	3.2	.65210	Agreed
Lack or insufficient laboratory/practical instruments cause students' school dropout	70	45	20	15	3.1	.99439	Agreed
Grand Mean					3.4		Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2018 N = 150 cut-off point = 2.5

The results in table 3 above revealed that for question items 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15, the mean response scores were 3.6, 3.8, 3.2, 3.2 and 3.1 respectively, which are all greater than the cut-off point of 2.5. In addition, the grand mean score of 3.4 is also greater than the cut-off point of 2.5, indicating that the respondents generally agreed that overcrowded classroom settings, uncomfortable chairs for students to seat, inadequate infrastructural materials, lack or insufficient laboratory and practical instruments is another reason why students of secondary schools dropout in Bayelsa State. In other words, since the demand for secondary school education has increased, this has further increased the demand for teachers, the cost of physical infrastructure, science equipment, provision of library and laboratory facilities, etc.

The study discovered that in some public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, the government only renovates and paints the front view of buildings, while at the rear were dilapidated structures. The seats were

most inadequate. No public school in the state can conveniently adhere to 25 students per teacher arrangement. It was therefore reveals that lack of physical infrastructures in the school causes dropout. The result of the study is in corroboration with (King & Schielmann, 2004; Hammond, et al 2007) which observed that, negligence on the part of government on physical infrastructure causes school dropout. In some classes, students are up to 60 per teacher and seats dilapidated with licking roofs and school buildings due to inadequate classroom blocks. In most times, students sit to learn in uncomfortable desk and chair. It is an inconvenience to some students and due to this reason some of them later withdraw from the public school.

Furthermore, most students especially the ones from poor homes and family backgrounds lack access to instructional materials such as functional library with books and journals to aid their academic performance, no access to ICT facilities and computer installations for e-learning and research development, modern instructional boards with projectors, board makers and smart boards for teachers to conveniently deliver instruction. The situation further deteriorated which causes more students to dropout when mostly the science students lack sufficient laboratory/practical instruments and equipment for science classes (Anderson, 2000; Engin- Demir, 2009; Marshall, 2009)

Research Question Four: How does indiscipline/ crime and drug abuse causes secondary school dropout in Bayelsa State?

The results in table 4 below revealed that for question items 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20, the mean response scores were 3.4, 3.8, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.3 respectively, which is greater than the cut-off point of 2.5. Meanwhile, the grand mean score of 3.5 is also greater than the cut-off point of 2.5, indicating that it was the general opinion of respondents that indiscipline, crime and drug abuse by secondary school students affects dropout in Bayelsa State. The study agreed with the reports of (Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, 2009; Lehr, Johnson, Bremer, Cosio & Thompson, 2004), which observed that early-school-age children with early assault

conduct problems (aggressive behavior in early years of life) are at high risk for school dropout as well as substance abuse, violence, and delinquency in their later years.

Table 4: Responses of indiscipline, crime and drug abuse causes school dropout

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD	Decision
Assault conduct problems (aggressive behavior of students) causes school dropout	85	50	5	10	3.4	.84345	Agreed
When alcohol affects the student's central nervous system, it causes school dropout	120	25	3	2	3.8	.55486	Agreed
Infections such as ulcers and brain damage as a result of drug abuse causes school dropout	75	65	2	8	3.4	.55159	Agreed
Indiscipline (truancy and constant absenteeism from school) affects students dropout	85	55	7	3	3.5	.68267	Agreed
When students got jailed as a result of crimes in the school causes school dropout	65	75	4	6	3.3	.71884	Agreed
Grand Mean					3.5		Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2018 N = 150 cut-off point = 2.5

Studies have noted that alcohol is the most abused drug in Nigeria by school children which hampered education management in the secondary school system (Hofmann, 2006; NAFDAC, 2008; Ekpenyong, 2012). Similarly, young people in Bayelsa State like their counterparts from elsewhere in Nigeria use hard drugs like heroin, cocaine, mandrax, tranquilizers, tramadol, codeine, and other opiates and narcotics. Drug habits affect an individual's self-concept. Self-concept refers to the way an individual perceives himself or herself in a variety of areas for example academically, physically, and socially (Hofmann, 2006). Low self-esteem can lead to a detrimental redefinition of self-concept and this in turn can lead the student to indulge in escapist behavior such as drug and substance abuse.

Furthermore, (Merki, 1993) study found that when the students are feeling bad about themselves or are feeling unworthy, unloved or rejected, they turn to drugs. Students are affected more by these

emotions and their inability to cope given their adolescent stage of development. During this stage, identity formation is important and self-concept plays a major role (Erikson, 1974). Addiction can develop when students' insecurities combine with the influence of peers and the media. Drugs then become the social and emotional focus at the expense of other interests and activities. This gradually leads to social, emotional and physical problems and new feelings of guilt, despair and helplessness. To worsen the situation, students now face some consequences which include insomnia, prolonged loss of appetite, increased body temperature, greater risk of hepatitis and HIV/AIDS infection, death, various forms of cancers, ulcers and brain damage as a result of drug abuse which lead to dropout in school (Erikson, 1974; Thornberry, Moore, & Christenson, 1985; NAFDAC, 2008).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The perceived causes of secondary school dropout have been observed to be very intricate with multiple interwoven factors responsible for leading to this complex situation. This study has made modest attempt to explore this complex phenomenon with reference to the individual, parents, society and school-based factors as contributing to school dropout. It was found that parents' background, unexpected personal problems of students, lack of infrastructure in schools, and indiscipline, crime and drug abuse are the major causes of school dropout in Bayelsa State. But one may ask, what are the effects of school dropout?

The effects of school dropout are numerous. It contributes to increasing number of illiterates and criminals in the society and general backwardness in the future educational development of the state. The youth leaving the school without completion have brought negative bearing on their economic lives. Dropouts are much more likely than their peers who graduated to be unemployed, living in poverty, receiving public assistance, in prison on death row, unhealthy, divorced and ultimately single parents with children who will dropout from high school themselves. Again, some dropouts are likely to find themselves in manual laborers, prostitution, drug selling, smuggling, robbery and

even practicing occultism and “blood money” in order to eke out a living.

Therefore, suggestion of some solutions to curb the problem of secondary school dropout is pertinent. First of all, it is recommended that government should make educational policies that will have broad financial sponsorship scope to avoid the negative socio-political and economic effects on the formal school system. Among others, there is the need to ensure that over aged school enrolment is avoided, abolish early marriage, provide counseling to students, readmit dropout students, establish more secondary schools with modern and adequate physical infrastructure, review the curriculum to include students’ interest, offer scholarships for intelligent students, create job opportunities for parents, employment of adequate teaching staff with conducive facilities, offer loans and grants to provide financial support, abolish internal and external influence which obviously affects the education system, enforce strict laws on drug or substance abuse, enforcements of legislation against hawking, provide unemployment benefits and ensure free and compulsory primary and secondary education for Bayelsa State in particular and Nigeria in general.

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