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# SCHOOL INPUT VARIABLES AS PREDICTORS OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IKOM EDUCATIONAL ZONE OF CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated school input variables and institutional effectiveness in public secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Two sub variables were used to state the objectives, research questions and hypotheses. This study adopted correlation design. The population of the study comprised of eighty one (81) public secondary schools in Ikom education zone of Cross River State. The sampling technique adopted for this study was stratified sampling technique. The schools were stratified based on local education authority. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 40 schools, which is 50% of the schools. An instrument titled School Input Variables and Institutional Effectiveness Questionnaire (SIVIEQ) was used for data collection. Results from the findings revealed that financial resources and school facilities significantly predict institutional effectiveness. It was recommended that there is need for government to improve funding to schools and school administrators should track how these funds are spent at institutional levels and also allocate budgets strategically towards school needs to sustain institutional effectiveness.

**Keywords:** School Input, Financial Resources, School Facilities, School Effectiveness.

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## INTRODUCTION

Globally, the growing concern over the state of ineffectiveness and poor output of the educational system is increasing. Most stakeholders are decrying the manner in which the school system seems to be losing its value. This is coupled with the low academic performance of students in external examinations, especially at the secondary schools level in Nigeria. According to Abubakar (2018) and Amos (2021) stated that a lot of reasons have been given for this persisting problem ranging from inadequate school input variables such as poor classroom management skills, lack of instructional facilities, low funding, political interference in students' admission and teachers' recruitment, to mention a few. Over the years, these have in many cases resulted to poor learning resources input-process-output which directly and indirectly undermines the effectiveness of the school system in term of students' academic performance amongst others.

Adamu (2016), secondary school effectiveness is conceptualized as the degree to which the school system meets its stated mission for qualitative educational service delivery. This involves the implementation of strong and effective academic leadership with sustained focus on teaching and learning. Okoi et al. (2023) posited that secondary school effectiveness entails the conservation of safe school climate, building staff skills and creation of high expectations for all students. This implies that effectively institutionalized public secondary schools should have a safe, civil, healthy and intellectually stimulating and supportive learning environment. This means that the school makes students to feel respected and connected with the teachers and other staff such that they are constantly engaged in effective teaching and learning for improved academic performance (Joseph et al., 2019).

Unfortunately, the researchers have recently observed the high rate of ineffectiveness in public secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State of Nigeria (Ahmed & Dawit, 2015). This is because students are always found wanting in effective reading, writing and arithmetic. Other students find it too difficult to do their assignments. Some prefer examination malpractice as a short-cut to acquire the needed number of credits to advance into the higher institution at the expense of learning effectively. Some of the students cannot effectively spell or pronounce words and sentences correctly. Akdil (2017) rightly argued that most of them cannot answer simple questions, do their class works, pass internal examinations, relate well with fellow students and teachers in simple and correct English Language. Others flock miracle centres within and outside the State for external examinations. These breed multiple illiterates and result in unemployment, over dependent on parents for stipend rather than making life meaningful for themselves and the society. This problem has become a serious matter of concern today because many graduates turn to corporate criminals in the State. Some leave the school without acquiring basic employable and life skills (FRN, 2014).

Furthermore, some research evidence (Ali, 2010; Okoi et al., 2023) have also indicated that there is decline in the effectiveness of secondary school as observed by students' massive failure in West African Examination Council. Ezekiel (2022) conducted a study in Imo State which revealed that only 23.2 percent in the State (that is, 529,425,000 out of 1,692,435,000) of candidates who participated in the 2021 May/June Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (SSCE) administered by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) recorded credit pass in five subjects, excluding English Language and Mathematics, as against 36.57 percent in 2020 and 50.81 percent in 2019. It is very worrisome to see that the effectiveness of public secondary school is drastically declining on annual basis. This problem increases student's dropout rate,

repetition rate, absenteeism, wastage, and failure rates. It has also raised concerns among several stakeholders, including parents, teachers, community members, and curriculum developers, among others.

Recently, the high rate of ineffectiveness in public secondary schools in Nigeria generally and in the area of study in particular triggered the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to study the cause of this problem (Ebi & Ubi, 2017). Most of the factors identified are poorly ventilated classroom space, insufficient learning and recreational facilities in the school premises, dysfunctional libraries, dilapidated laboratories and decayed workshops. Others are frequent power outage, lack of new technologies and innovations which were expected to be utilized in the school system to achieve better educational outcomes, unhealthy school climate, poor inter-student-teachers relationship, industrial actions and poor school input variables among others (Ofem et al., 2019; Ameh & Ofem, 2021; Okoi et al., 2024).

Despite the tremendous efforts by the government in providing instructional resources for students with regular workshop training for teachers, there is still high rate of ineffectiveness in most of the public secondary schools in Ikom education zone of Cross River State. This has been attributed to poor financial resources, lack of teaching materials, insufficient school facilities, low teacher quality and unscreened students' admission.

One of the variables of school input which can influence secondary school effectiveness is financial resources (Allen, 2012). They are the funds and assets that finance the school organization, educational activities and investments. These financial resources are monies raised by the school through several ways including charges, endowments and alumni among others which keep the schools operating effectively in terms of teaching and learning (Etagar & Etagar, 2020; Ofem et al., 2021; Ofem et al., 2022).

In simple terms, financial resources are the monies that keep school programmes operating (Ofem et al., 2021). Okoi and Odigwe (2016) averred that a school system is perceived as cost effective if no financial resources is wasted and all processes are optimized to save cost. Financial management in education is one of the most important and challenging aspects of a school principal's job as it can impact the overall school management and success, as well as students' achievement. A school principal need to be able to plan, organize, direct and control the financial activities such as procurement and utilization of funds of the organization (Ngigi & Tanui, 2019). The concept and practice of accountability and transparency in financial management is essential to ensure that all funds received are channeled and spent as entrusted by the Ministry of Education. The school principals have the unenviable task of matching, monitoring and evaluating all available resources, both monetary and human, with their educational activities with utmost accountability (Ofem et al., 2022; Ekanem et al., 2023).

On the contrary, it seems that some administrators in the study area misappropriate financial resources in private usage, hence ignoring the procurement of relevant instructional resources needed by teachers and students for effective teaching and learning. It is equally observed that some administrators hardly use the monies in purchase of stationeries and hiring competent teachers for effective instructional delivery. There is no provision for working capital decisions. Poor financial decisions among most administrators in the study area negatively affect school effectiveness in terms of teaching delivery and ensuring conducive learning environment.

Researchers such as Okoi and Odigwe (2016), carried out a research on financial management and programme sustainability in universities in Cross River State. The study evaluated the effectiveness of school heads' financial management skills in the provision of quality education in secondary schools. The study also explored secondary data by reviewing

documents and literature materials from online publications and libraries to attain the intended purpose of the study. The study found out that financial management skills such as mobilizing school funds, monitoring, evaluation of budget and auditing skills were essential for school financial management. The study also found that most of the school heads, bursars, and clerks possess insufficient skills in financial management as school managers. Other financial management challenges were shortage of schools funds, poor monitoring, evaluation and auditing of schools finances. The study suggested that strategies such as capacity building among the school heads, bursars and clerks. Also, decentralization of financial decision making, relevant school mission and vision, enhancement of effective monitoring, evaluation and auditing of financial report as strategies for improving school heads' financial management skills. Finally, this study recommended that school heads as prime financial managers of schools should demonstrate a professional code of conduct with high ethical standards by being honest in financial management to ensure quality education provision in secondary schools.

School facilities are the resources utilized by students and instructors to help in order to promote effectiveness in the teaching and learning process (Bande, 2013). According to Alimi (2014), the frequency with which available school facilities such as laboratory facilities, library facilities, textbooks, and other reference materials are used during respective class courses is referred to as utilization of school facilities. The significance of school facilities in the establishment of a successful educational system, especially at the secondary level cannot be overstated.

Availability of teaching materials within the disposal of teachers can enhance the institutional effectiveness of public secondary schools (Nenbee & Igbogidi, 2021). They involve simulation, animated and non-animated objects prepared and used by the classroom teachers for effective instructional delivery in the school environment and to make life easier for the teacher. They support the professional practice of teaching including timers, flip charts, world globes and flashcards among others. But it has been observed that the inability of administrators to provide adequate teaching materials has made it difficult for most teachers in the study area to plan their lessons, analyze the scheme of work and implement the syllabus effectively in tandem to students' background, age range and learning experience which has negatively affected teaching and learning.

Kwaji (2019) examined the impact of educational facilities on secondary school effectiveness in Lassa, Askira-Uba Local Government of Borno State. It covered five secondary schools. Two hundred (200) respondents took part in the study (one hundred and fifty) 150 students, and fifty (50 teachers). Findings from the study revealed that presence of sufficient classrooms, libraries, hostel accommodation contributes positively to the student academic performance as well as their absence contributes negatively to some of the schools. Absence of electricity, computers, chairs, and desk had negative impact on the student performance. Sufficient text books and teaching materials facilitate learning. The findings further revealed that school buildings with well-equipped educational facilities did enhance teaching and learning with the help of qualified personnel. Conclusion was that facilities are potent to high academic achievement of students. The recommendations were that state government should develop more useful and reliable policies for provision and distribution of educational facilities and resources in Lassaaskira-Uba Local Government, and also school administrators should organize fund raising events to draw attention to the areas where facilities are seriously needed.

## Objective of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine school input variables as predictors of institutional effectiveness of public secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine whether:

- Financial resources predict secondary school effectiveness.
- Schools facilities predict secondary school effectiveness.

## Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to direct the study:

- Financial resources do no significantly predict secondary school effectiveness.
- School facilities do no significantly predict secondary school effectiveness.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted correlation design. The population of the study comprised of eighty one (81) public secondary schools in Ikom education zone of Cross River State. The sampling technique adopted for this study was stratified sampling technique. The schools were stratified based on local education authority. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 40 schools that is 50% of the schools. An instrument title School Input Variables and Institutional Effectiveness Questionnaire (SIVIEQ), was used for data collection. The 4-point Likert scale was used in constructing the questionnaire. The scale contained information such as Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Though teachers were not part of this study, but were used as instrument for data collection. Twelve teachers were selected from each school to provide answers to the questionnaires as it is believed and assumed that they are part of the schools and can provide information suitable for this study. At the end of the exercise four hundred and fifty six (456) questionnaires were considered valid and were used for data analysis.

## RESULTS

**Hypothesis One:** Financial resources do no significantly predict secondary school effectiveness.

The variables were measured continuously. To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression was applied to the data. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of simple linear regression analysis on the prediction of financial resources on secondary school effectiveness (N=456)

Effectiveness variables	Sources of variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	f-ratio	p-level	R <sup>2</sup>
School effectiveness	Regression	3.997	1	3.997	.317	.547	.001
	Residual	5727.036	454	12.615			
	Total	5731.033	455				

P>.05

Table 1 show that the analysis of variance in the regression output produced an f-ratio of .317 for school effectiveness. This f-ratio is statistically significant at .05 alpha level. On the basis of this result, the null hypothesis was rejected ( $p < .05$ ). This means that, financial resources significantly predict secondary school effectiveness in the study area. The results also show a coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) of .001 for school effectiveness. This implies that the 0.1 percent was accounted for by financial resources.

**Hypothesis Two:** School facilities do no significantly predict secondary school effectiveness.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is school facilities while the dependent variable is secondary school effectiveness. The variables were measured continuously. To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression was applied to the data. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of simple linear regression analysis on the prediction of school facilities on secondary school effectiveness (N=456)

Effectiveness variables	Sources of variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	f-ratio	p-level	$R^2$
School facilities	Regression	.010	1	0.01	.001	.977	.000
	Residual	5731.022	454	12.623			
	Total	5731.033	455				

P>.05

Table 2 shows that the analysis of variance in the regression output produced an f-ratio of .001 for school effectiveness. This f-ratio is not statistically significant at .05 probability level. On the basis of this result, the second null hypothesis was rejected ( $p < .05$ ). This means that, school facilities significantly predict secondary school effectiveness in the study area. The results also show a coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) of .000 for school effectiveness. This implies that the 0.0 percent was accounted for by school facilities.

## DISCUSSION

The finding on this hypothesis revealed that financial resources did not significantly predict secondary school effectiveness. This is because other factors, such as teaching quality, curriculum design, parental involvement, and student motivation, may have played a more influential role in determining the overall effectiveness of the schools. This finding is not in agreement with that of Abubakar (2018), Akdil (2017) and Okoi et al. (2023) whose results found a significant relationship between spending levels and student achievement. The finding is equally in agreement with that of Ezeh and Ogara (2020) whose multiple regression analysis reported that differences in funding levels did not produce significant different examination scores. The finding is in consonance with that of Ngigi and Tanui (2019) who similarly found a significant correlation between per-pupil funding and pass rates on final exams after accounting for teacher quality, class size, and infrastructure variables. The finding is equally in tandem with that of Amos (2021) who employed an ANCOVA to assess the influence of total budget size on outcomes while controlling for teacher factors. The study results indicated that financial

resources have a statistically significant effect on student achievement levels. It is also in line with that of Joseph et al. (2019) who reported no significant relationship between spending levels and graduation rates after controlling for non-financial factors.

The reason for this finding is that while financial resources are often considered an important factor in determining the effectiveness of educational institutions, research has shown that their impact on secondary school effectiveness may be less significant than initially assumed. One reason for this is that financial resources alone do not guarantee improved educational outcomes. While additional funding can provide schools with more opportunities to invest in resources like technology, materials, and facilities, how those resources are utilized is crucial. Factors such as teaching quality and instructional practices, curriculum design, and effective leadership play a substantial role in determining the overall effectiveness of a secondary school (Ololube, 2024).

The finding from hypothesis two revealed that school facilities as input variables significantly predict secondary school effectiveness in the study area, which suggests that other factors such as teaching quality, curriculum design, and student support may also play prominent role in determining the overall effectiveness of the schools. This finding is in line with that of Okoi and Odigwe (2016) whose study found that most of the school heads, bursars, and clerks possess sufficient skills in financial management as school managers. It also corroborate that of Kwaji (2019) whose study also indicated significant impact of school facilities on secondary school effectiveness. The findings suggest that while the availability of modern and well-equipped facilities is desirable, their presence alone may not be sufficient to drive improvements in student achievement or overall school effectiveness.

The finding of this study is consistent with that of Agbor et al. (2022) whose study found a significant association between facilities and school effectiveness. The research suggested that factors beyond facilities, such as teacher-student interactions, instructional practices, and school leadership, may have also significantly influence student outcomes. It is equally in line with that of Livinus and James (2016) whose student also reported significant results regarding the influence of school facilities on secondary school effectiveness. The findings indicated that while access to basic facilities is important for creating a conducive learning environment, the impact on student achievement may be statistically significant.

The philosophy behind this finding is that while school facilities are important aspect of the learning environment, these studies indicate that other factors, such as teaching quality, curriculum design, and student motivation, may also play substantial role in determining overall school effectiveness. It is important for policymakers and educators to consider a holistic approach to improving secondary education that encompasses various factors beyond school facilities to promote student achievement and success.

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of the entire study revealed that though financial resources and availability of school facilities do not really predict school effectiveness. Other extraneous variables also played an important role in improving school effectiveness.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- Government should improve funding to schools and school administrators should track how these funds are spent at institutional levels and be more strategic in budgetary allocation.
- Relevant Ministries, Departments, Agencies, and Commissions should ensure that all secondary schools and classrooms have sufficient and up-to-date teaching and learning facilities in order to enhance effective teaching and learning.

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