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**FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH STUDENTS' POPULATION DECLINE IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND EXPLOSION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study investigated factors associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State with particular reference to selected secondary schools in Obio/Akpor. A sample size of 120 parents was used for the study. Stratified random sampling technique was used to compose the sample. Two research questions and two research hypotheses were tested in the study at 0.05 level of significance. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled: Explosion in Public Secondary Schools in Rivers State Questionnaire (EXPUSSIRS). This was designed by the researcher. It consists of six (6) items based on patterned rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE) = 4 points, High Extent (HE), 3 points, Low Extent (LE) 2 points, and Very Low Extent (VLE) 1 point. Mean was used to answer the research questions and z-test was used to test the hypotheses. It was found out that the Economic recession is associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Government should involve in combating the problems of global economic downturn.

**KEYWORDS:** Private, Public, School, Explosion, Decline.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The establishment of private schools in Nigeria dated back to the era of missionary activities in Nigeria. Missionary schools were later taken over by government. Private secondary schools came into Nigerian educational system in the early 1930s. A new set of private secondary schools came into existence in the educational system from the 1970s following the takeover of schools by the

different state governments in Nigeria from the original owners. School takeover was necessary in order to create uniform standards, enhance fair distribution of educational facilities.

Private and public schools have existed side by side in Nigeria since the nineteenth century. Private schools represent a significant part of the education sector and provide an opportunity for children to attend schools, at cost, that may offer benefits unavailable in the public school system. Parents might choose to send their children to private schools for a variety of reasons, including the availability of academic programs and extracurricular activities, religious reasons, dissatisfaction with the local public schools, and school characteristics such as class size and student-teacher ratios. Public and private schools are not exactly same. They are different in terms of their funding and administration. Whereas the former receives most of their funds from (and are administered by) the government, the latter rely on private sources, tuition fees and other levies charged and their control is largely private. The emergence of mass establishment of private schools appears to be due to deplorable conditions in public schools. It was observed that many parents seem to prefer private schools because they thought they were more efficient and effective on their job. It was believed that personnel in private schools were more dedicated on their-job. Many research findings have revealed that private schools were good enough for children education. Gregory (1992), and Kenshaw and Blank (1993) reported that private schools have lower incidences of negative school behaviour than public schools. Adiotomre and Ekwevugbe (2005) submitted that private schools were instructionally more effective than public schools when it comes to effective use of instructional materials, use of variety of teaching methods and student evaluation techniques.

Private schools are independent schools, which are established by non- governmental agencies, for profit making venture while public schools were established schools, which are common goods, opened to all members of the society.

Gobir (2005) identified three categories of private schools, private school owner's especially secondary schools, who could not afford quality schools, efficient staff and up to date laboratories and libraries. Another category of private school which intends to maintain more conducive environment for learning, and third category which are good private secondary schools that provide a challenging education.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) recently revealed that as many as 51 million workers were fired in 2010 globally, while 30 million more jobs are at risk. The United Nations, meanwhile, predicts that 200 million workers mostly in developing economies could be pushed into extreme poverty. The global unemployment rate is estimated at 7.5 percent in 2010, up from 6.5 percent in 2009 and 6.7 percent in 2008. This implies that the global economic recession is already resulting in a dramatic increase in the number of people joining the labour market and swelling the rank of the unemployed, creating a "labour market epidemic." Downsizing was also a result of the recession. There have been layoffs, downsizing, and retrenchments.

### **Statement Of The Problem**

Private schools are private enterprises where all attention is channeled towards the maximization of profit. It therefore follows that private secondary schools' principals do everything possible to see that their resource maintenance is in order so as to attract more customers (students). Their ability to do this therefore determines the extent to which they will remain in business. On the part of those in public secondary schools, less effort is expended on the resource maintenance because schools belong to government. The notion that, at the end of the month their salaries will be paid is responsible for this lackadaisical behavior for the fact that salaries are not tied to performance. The

current global economic crisis has affected many areas of life and the education sector at large. The Nigerian economy continued to witness recession, characterized with inflation, unemployment and declining businesses. The situation has been tagged to the negative effects the global economic meltdown has had on the country while retrenchment and downsizing appear to be a way out in most sectors. This contributes to the growth of jobless individuals in the street since there are no jobs to which these individuals will find themselves attached when retrenched in one. The population explosion resulting in high proportion of students within the population of private schools' students to public schools has been as a result of economic recessions, parents' exposure; drop in finance, loss of jobs, inflation, location and proximity. Therefore, the thrust of this study is to investigate the factors responsible for students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State.

### **Purpose Of The Study**

It is the purpose of the study to investigate the factors associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State. In specific terms, the study intends to:

1. Assess economic recession as factor associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State.
2. Find out the extent of parents' exposure as factor associated with students decline.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions will be answered to arrive at the findings of the study.

1. What is the extent of economic recession as factor associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State?
2. What is the extent of parents' exposure as factor associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses, which will be tested at 0.05 levels of significance, have been formulated to guide this study.

1. There is no significant difference between the opinion of male and female parents on economic recession as factor associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference between the opinion of male and female parents on parents' exposure as factor associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

Evaluative Survey design was adopted for the study. The design describes an issue or an event to make judgment about the value or worth or effectiveness of that issue or event. The researcher chooses this design as it will assess Factors Associated with Students Decline in Private Schools and Explosion in Public Schools in Rivers State.

### **Area Of Study**

The study was carried out in the Four (4) selected Public Secondary Schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The schools are: Community Secondary School — Okoro-nu-du, Community Girls High School — Rumukuta, Government Secondary School — Rumeme Agip and Government Secondary School, Elekiaha. The parents in these schools are many. The researcher is therefore certain that adequate sample size, representative of the entire population of parents will be obtained from the schools. Furthermore, the researcher is certain that the parents can accurately

read, understand and fill the copies of the questionnaires. Obio-Akpor is one of the 8 local government areas that formed the Rivers East senatorial district. It consists of 17 electoral wards administered by the Obio-Akpor Local Government Council. Obio-Akpor is bounded by Port Harcourt (local government area) to the south, Oyigbo to the east, Ikwerre to the north, and Emohua to the west. It is located between latitudes 4045'N and 4060'N and longitudes 6050'E and 8000'E. Obio-Akpor is a local government area in the metropolis of Port Harcourt, one of the major centres of economic activities in Nigeria, and one of the major cities of the Niger Delta, located in Rivers State. The local government area covers 260 km<sup>2</sup> and at the 2006 Census held a population of 878,890. Its postal code or ZIP code is 500102. Obio-Akpor has its headquarters at Rumuodomaya. The original indigenous occupants of the area are the Ikwerre people.

### **Population Of The Study**

The population of the study consists of all the parents in the selected Secondary Schools for the study in Obio Akpor Local Government Area. As at the time of the study, the marginal estimate of population of parents in the selected secondary schools is about 200 in the 4 secondary schools in Obio Akpor. The population of parents instead of students has been chosen for this study because parents are the most appropriate population for this since it is the parents that encountered these difficulties of live more than the children.

### **Sample And Sampling Technique**

A sample size of 120 parents was used for the study. Therefore 80 male and 40 female parents were respectively drawn from the population. Simple random sampling was used since the sample size of the population for the study was homogenous. Hence the researcher used the entire sample.

### **Instrument For Data Collection**

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled: Explosion in public Secondary Schools in Rivers State Questionnaire (EXPUSSIRS). This was designed by the researcher. It consists of six (6) items based on patterned rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE) 4 points, High Extent (HE), 3 points, Low Extent (LE) = 2 points, and Very Low Extent (VLE) 1 point. The research instrument is divided into sections A and B. The first Section contains background information on the respondents while sections B contain the items of the questionnaire. Adequate instruction on how to fill the questionnaire was given at each section. Each section provides data for answering a particular research question.

### **Validation Of The Instrument**

The research purpose, research questions, hypotheses and draft copies questionnaire were submitted to two experts in Educational Management one expert in Measurement and Evaluation all from the faculty of education, University of Port-Harcourt, Port-Harcourt for validation. These experts examined the items, as well as to ascertain if the items are related to the objectives of the study. After scrutinizing the instrument, they offered useful suggestions. Suggestions led to a modification of the questionnaire before the final copies were produced.

### **Reliability Of The Instrument**

The test-re-test method for testing reliability was applied. In doing this, the researcher assisted by four research assistants who administered copies of the questionnaire on a sample of 30 Parents in the selected schools in Akwa Ibom State Nigeria. They schools are: Esetang High School --- Ekim Town, Community Secondary School - Esa Ekpo and Government Secondary School Ikot Akata. After an interval of two weeks, copies of the questionnaire were administered again on the same sample. The responses were collated and the scores computed using the Pearson Product Moment

Correlation Analysis. This produced a coefficient of 0.87 which indicated that the instrument is reliable for administration.

### 3. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The researcher collected data with the help of four 4 research assistants who were staff of the schools in the areas of study. These research assistants were briefed on how to distribute copies of the questionnaire. Briefing involved describing how the questionnaire will be distributed to the respondent on the day of their Parents teachers Association (PTA) meeting in the school selected for the study. In each school visited, copies of the questionnaire were administered on the respondents by the researcher with the research assistants. Each respondent was allowed to respond to the items before retrieving the filled questionnaire.

#### Method Of Data Analysis

Mean scores were used in answering the research questions. The mean ratings of the respondents for each item were computed separately and the average mean for the respondents obtained. The mean was used in answering the research questions. In scoring the questionnaire items, the four clusters in section B were measured on a weighted value of four through one 4= Very High Extent (VHE), 3=High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), very Low Extent (VLE). Since the 4point rating scale was used for the instruments, the decision rule was based on the midpoints for the scale was 2.50. Therefore, only mean scores of 2.50 and above were accepted as indications of High while mean scores below 2.50 were regarded as indications of Low. In analyzing the data for the null hypotheses, the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to 30 compare the variability of scores among respondents on the issues raised in the research questions. All the null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

### 4. RESULTS:

The presentation of results here under was strictly based on the research questions and hypotheses posed for the study.

**Research Question 1:** What is the extent of economic recession as factor associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State?

**Table 1: Responses Economic Recession**

S/N	ITEMS	VHE 4	HE 3	LE 2	VLE 1	TOTAL SCORES	NO. OF RESP.	MEAN	DEC.
1	Economic recession has affected the economy negatively	85	35	1	1	448	120	3.73	Accept
2	It brings about retrenchment	56	60	4	-	412	120	3.43	Accept
3	Economic recession increases the level of unemployment	40	72	2	8	388	120	3.32	Accept

Table 1 indicates that items 1, 2 and 3 where above the cut-off point of 2.50 which the respondents agree to the research question. Therefore, from this analysis, it indicates that economic recession is

a factor associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State.

**Research Question 2:** What is the extent of parents' exposure as factor associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State?

**Table 2: Responses of Parent Exposure**

S/N	ITEMS	VHE 4	HE 3	LE 2	VLE 1	TOTAL SCORES	NO. OF RESP.	MEAN	DEC.
4	Most parents are involved with the daily school activities of their children.	42	53	14	11	366	120	3.05	Accept
5	Most parents spend more than their income.	67	53	-	-	427	120	3.56	Accept
6	Most parents educational background is low	98	22	-	-	458	120	3.82	Accept

Table 2 indicates that items 4, 5 and 6 where above the cut-off point of 2.50 which the respondents agree to the research question. Therefore, from this analysis, it indicates that, parent's exposure is a factor associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between the opinion of male and female parents on economic recession as factor associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State.

**Table 3:** Z-test of significant difference between the opinion of male and female parents on economic recession as factor associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State.

Sex	N	X	SD	a	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	72	38.97	12.05	0.05	118	1.38	1.96	<b>Ho1 Accepted</b>
Female	48	35.53	7.12					

The Z-test presented in the table 3 revealed that the t-calculated value for the mean scores of male and female parents is 1.38. At 118 degree of freedom, the table value is 1.96. Since the t-cal is less than the t-crit, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This indicated there is no significant difference between the opinion of male and female parents on economic recession as factor associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State. Thus, they are factors associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference between the opinion of male and female parents on parents' exposure as factor associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State.



**Table 4:** Z-test of significant difference between the opinion of male and female parents on parents' exposure as factor associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State.

Sex	N	X	SD	a	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	68	3.40	0.96	0.05	118	1.92	1.96	<b>Ho2 Accepted</b>
Female	52	2.81	1.02					

The Z-test presented in the table 4 revealed that the t-calculated value for the mean scores of male and female parents is 1.92. At 118 degree of freedom, the table value is 1.96. Since the t-cal is less than the t-crit, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This indicated there is no significant difference between the opinion of male and female parents on parents' exposure as factor associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State. Thus, they are factors associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State.

## 5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results or findings of the study are discussed here one by one:

1. Economic Recession is associated with students decline in Private Schools and explosion in Public Schools in Rivers State.

The analysis of the findings in table 1 showed that economic recession is a factor associated with students Decline in Private Schools and Explosion in Public Schools in Rivers State. Economic recession is a significant decline in economic activities across the economy, lasting longer than a few months. It is visible in decline in industrial production, employment, real income and wholesale-retail trade (Osolor, 2016). An economic recession is typically defined as a decline in gross domestic product (GDP) for two or more consecutive quarters. GDP is the market value of all goods and services produced within a country in a given period of time. Economic recession is a period of general economic decline and is typically accompanied by a drop in the stock market, an increase in unemployment, and a decline in the housing market. Generally, a recession is less severe than a depression. The blame for a recession generally falls on the federal leadership, often either the president himself, the head of the Federal Reserve, or the entire administration.

"It is pathetic that things have degenerated to this level where parents are forced to compromise the future of their children due to hardship. There is no alternative to education. Education should be seen not as a luxury but a necessity." One of the parents attributed her decision to withdraw two of her children from a private school to "non-payment of my salaries by the company I work for, and double-digit inflation rates which have brought untold hardship to me and others." She added that the economic situation has made it difficult for her and other parents to meet financial obligations. "The irregularity of my salary has drastically reduced my purchasing power," she said. Our correspondent learned that, by contrast, several government schools had seen a major spike in the number of student admissions.

Results from table 2 indicate that Parents' Exposure is Factor Associated with Students Decline in Private Schools and Explosion in Public Schools Rivers State. In the search for methods to improve academic performance, educational researchers and practitioners have advanced policies designed to promote parental involvement in children's education (Abrams & Gibbs, 2002).

Teachers and school administrators encourage parents to support their children's academic pursuits at home, as well as in the classroom. Researchers continue to find evidence that higher levels of involvement by parents are related to academic success for students (Epstein, 2001).

According to Lareau (2000), parental involvement is seen as an integration of home and school. This practice encourages parents to participate in the life of the school, as well as attend to the learning of their children at home (Epstein, Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Jansorn, & Van Voorhis, 2002). Many educators believe that creating a community of families, students, teachers, and school administrators provides additional support for children's learning. Further evidence suggests that academic success may be predicted by the quality of these connections (Booth & Dunn, 1996).

Parent's exposure is a key factor for educational success: a stimulating home environment and parental engagement is crucial for a child's learning and cognitive, social and emotional development. However, the relationship between schools, parents and families may be challenging. On the one hand, this may be due to parents' previous education experiences, educational, cultural and socio-economic background, different parenting styles and a sense of distance from the school 'culture' and 'language'. On the other hand, this may be linked to teachers' perception of parents as passive, opportunistic or intrusive, and to lack of time and experience in reaching out to parents and engaging with them effectively. The promotion of parental involvement to increase academic success raises issues of equity, since rates of parental involvement are significantly higher among middle- and upper-class parents than in low-income families (de Car-valho, 2001). Researchers agree that rates of parental involvement are lower in low-income communities than in higher income schools (Abrams & Gibbs, 2002; Epstein, 1995; Lareau, 2000; O'Connor, 2001). Therefore, low-income children, with less involved parents, often experience fewer of the academic benefits than children coming from higher income homes. It follows, then, that children of higher income families are receiving more of the academic and attitudinal benefits of parental involvement than low-income children. Children of low socioeconomic status (SES) are at risk for lower academic achievement (McLloyd, 1990). For these children, rather than acting as a benefit, the lack of involvement by their parents only leaves them farther behind their higher income counterparts.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the central theme of this study was to assess the factors associated with students decline in private schools and explosion in public schools in Rivers State. The ongoing global financial crisis has been accompanied by a recession in which has affected many families. Indeed, the factors listed on the course of this study are related to the reasons why public secondary schools in Rivers State are beginning to increase. Both private and public primary schools' systems have contributed immensely to the development of education in Nigeria. Public and private schools are not exactly same. They are different in terms of their funding and administration. Whereas the former receives most of their funds from (and are administered by) the government, the latter rely on private sources, tuition fees and other levies charged and their control is largely private. Private schools are private enterprises where all attention is channelled towards the maximization of profit.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Government should involve in combating the problems of global economic downturn.
2. There is need to create awareness for Parents' to be attending school activities.
3. Creation of jobs will be of advantage to families



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