
Full Length Research Paper

Declining educational standards of Federal Universities in the Northwest zone of Nigeria

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The importance of education to the development of any nation across the globe needs not to be underrated. So, the issue of falling standard of education has become the public outcry not only in Nigeria but across the world. Obviously, this problem of education is not limited to the Northwest zone of Nigeria but transcends her six geopolitical zones. However, the study is delimited to northwest zone of Nigeria for convenience. The study adopts descriptive survey design using students and lecturers of Federal Universities in the Northwest zone as the population of the study. Putting Krejcie and Morgan 1970 table of sample size into consideration, stratified random sampling technique was used to draw four hundred (400) respondents from the four selected universities as the sample used. A structured questionnaire entitled “Questionnaire on falling standard of university education in Nigeria (QFSUEN)” was used as data collection instrument. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation of experts in Bayero University Kano and Northwest University Kano respectively. The reliability of the instrument was tested with Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability test and it was found to be 0.85. The data collected was analyzed to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses using universal percentage, critical ratio and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). It is evident from the findings of this study that the standard of education in federal universities of Northwest zone of Nigeria has not fallen but the quality of academics and graduate performances are gradually declining. Also, the characteristics, causes, and the implications of this decline were discovered. Finally, recommendations were made to improve the quality of Federal University systems not only in Northwest zone but in Nigeria at large.

Key words: Skills acquisition, poor graduate performance, perception, academic achievement.

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian school system is increasingly challenged with many complex problems. Hence, there is a general outcry that the standards of education are falling and morals flagging (Ifedili and Ochuba, 2009; Arong and Ogbadu, 2010; Uwameiye, 2014). Borisade (2013) attests to the fact that many scholar laments that standard of education has fallen drastically as a result of factors militating against the school system in terms of

funding, political will, staffing and environmental factors among others.

However, Dike (2003) Sees standard of education as to how education contributes to the public health or socio-political and economic development of a nation. Consequently, Bello (2008) explains that standard of Education in University, is how University contributes to knowledge and solving problems besetting mankind in its host community and in the nation at large. This is to say that Universities were not established in a vacuum, but in an environment for the purpose of teaching, research and community service. Research on its own is an aspect of

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community service seeking to find remedies to problems facing the entire society. Therefore, failure of any University to achieve this goal has been termed falling standard.

Looking into the reasons accrued to the problems of falling standard of education in Nigeria. Chinelo (2011) opines that falling standard of education in Nigeria is caused by decline in competence and commitment of teachers as well as students' poor reading culture. Hence, over 70% of students at any level of our educational echelons do not know how to read, whether for pleasure or for academic purpose (Chinelo, 2011). Though many students have been hiding under high cost of textbooks for not reading as expected forgetting that technology has made knowledge universal and accessible to both teachers and students at any time of the day provided that the network is available. The excuses are just indexes of awareness for negative attitude of students to reading and learning generally.

Technically, standard of education can be defined as the rules, regulations, policies, programs and guidelines made by the political environment of educational system and put in place to ensure quality education in Nigeria. These ingredients for ensuring educational quality are written in the National Policy on Education (NPE) which was firstly launched in 1977. These ingredients of standard cut across many areas of education such as planning, implementation, administration, funding and a host of others. According to the National Policy on Education (2013), The National Policy on Education is the national guideline for the effective administration, management and implementation of education at all tiers of government. The National Policy on Education therefore, is a statement of intentions, expectations, goals, prescriptions, standards and requirements for quality education delivery in Nigeria (FRN, 2013).

Education is meant to deliver many goals which can be referred to as its dividends and any form of Education lacking those dividends, has no quality. According to Ogbadu in Arong and Ogbadu (2010) the forward of open secrets of academic excellence, quality education is that its product had sound education which can be defended by its graduate products. From the foregoing, it could be rightly deduced that, when the degree of excellence in education takes down ward movement, its quality is then said to be declining.

By and large, there are two major areas of decline in quality of education that scholars have pointed out. These include; Poor Graduate Performance (PGP) and Poor Academic Achievement (PAA). The concept of PGP is strong enough to tarnish the image of the institution. It is a situation whereby students cannot defend the result given to them during employment interviews as well as in the world of work. A number of complaints have been made on several occasions whereby some Nigerian University graduates cannot speak simple and correct

English or write a report while in the NYSC missions. The concept of PGP could be held responsible for many poor goods and services in Nigerian market of the type that even Nigerian themselves use to avoid made in Nigerian products let alone the foreigners. PGP is a showcase of incompetence among institutional graduates while PAA is a reflection of incompetence among the students up to their point of graduation. Therefore, an undergraduate student with many carryovers and low Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) could be said to be experiencing the menace of PAA.

According to Arong and Ogbadu (2010), the causes of decline in quality of education include but not limited to; Lack of qualified teachers; lack of instructional materials; inadequate library facilities; poor remuneration for teachers; poor attitudes of students towards learning; lack of parental responsibilities, misplaced priority on education by government, corruption or lack of integrity among some educational workers. Arong and Ogbadu (2010) concluded that these causes of decline in quality of education are the outcome of poor schools' inspection and supervision otherwise Poor Quality Control (PQC).

Some blame pupils for these complex problems and moral decadence. A thoughtful few think that they are due to the nature of changes in all directions. Arong and Ogbadu (2010) posit that majority blame the teachers for the woes in our schools, because they are not as devoted and dedicated to the cause of education as their predecessors. However, teachers as a group blame parents, students and government. They blame government for unattractive condition of service and poor physical facilities in some parts of the educational system.

In an attempt to solve the problems, it would be recalled that Nigeria's education system has changed from the colonial 8-5-2-3 in (1872-1960) to the after-independence 6-5-2-3 in (1961-1980) to the erstwhile 6-3-3-4 in (1981-1998) and now the 9-3-4 basic education system of 1999 till date. Despite the fact that 9-3-4 structure is yet to be fully implemented in most states of the Federation, people are beginning scared of another failure as recorded in the 6-3-3-4 structure, and are asking for the old 6-5-2-3 which according to them, produced the great Nigerian scholars of the 20th century whose contributions to national development is seemingly being eroded instead of being built-upon by educational products of today.

However, other scholars have a contrary view; saying, is not the standard that has fallen but those products from the school system. According to Bello (2010), this vary argument occurs because there is no well-defined instrument to measure it with utmost reliability and validity. Contemplating on the statement of Okoroma (2007) that a problem well defined is half solved, so the problem of Nigerian education should be well defined. By this, Nigerian observer (2008) opines that, the issue of

the quality of Education in Nigeria should be critically analyzed before determining whether or not the standard has fallen.

Research objectives

The purpose of this study is to:

- i.) Examine the opinion of respondents on decline quality or falling standard of education in Federal Universities of Northwest zone, Nigeria.
- ii.) Examine the evidences of decline in Quality of Education in Federal Universities of Northwest zone, Nigeria.
- iii.) Examine the causes of decline in Quality of Education in Federal Universities of Northwest zone, Nigeria.
- iv.) Examine the implications of decline in Quality of Education in Federal Universities of Northwest zone Nigeria.
- v.) Examine the suggestions to the problem of decline in Quality of Education in Federal Universities of Northwest zone, Nigeria.

Research questions

The following research questions were designed to pilot the study.

- i.) What is the perception of respondents on falling standard or decline in quality of education in Federal Universities in the Northwest zone of Nigeria?
- ii.) What are evidences of decline in quality of education in Federal Universities of Northwest zone Nigeria?
- iii.) What are the causes of decline in quality of education in Federal Universities of Northwest zone Nigeria?
- iv.) What are the economic implications of decline in quality of education in Federal Universities of Northwest zone Nigeria?
- v.) What are the suggestions to the problem of decline in quality of education in Federal Universities in the Northwest zone of Nigeria?

Research hypothesis

H₀₁: there is no significant difference on respondents' perception on falling standard or decline in quality of education in Federal Universities in the Northwest zone of Nigeria.

H₀₂: there is no significant difference on respondents' level of education and their perceptions on evidences of decline in quality of Federal Universities in the Northwest zone of Nigeria.

H₀₃: there is no significant difference across gender on the causes of decline in quality of education in Federal Universities in the Northwest zone of Nigeria.

Review of related empirical studies

Arong and Ogbadu (2010) perhaps considered "Falling Standard of Education in Nigeria (FSEN)" as unprofessional and as a layman term, thus, they prefer to use Declining Quality of Education in Nigeria (DQEN). The problem of declining quality of education in Nigeria is mainly an administrative one and adequate educational inspection and supervision will produce high quality education, while lack of it will produce declining quality (Arong and Ogbadu, 2010).

Borisade (2013) however, discovers that lecturers, students' societal ills, overloaded curriculum were responsible factors and recommends that lecturers welfare, adequate funding, provision of infrastructures, prompt payment of retired staff gratuities and review of overloaded curricula will go a long way at improving the standard of education. Chinelo (2011) posits that when appropriate skills are lacking in any production system, the outcome is poor quality, which undermines capacity building and sustainable development in any nation.

Okoroma (2007) states categorically that "a problem well defined is half solved" so, the problem of Nigerian education should be well defined. As an instrument for overall development, education must be of good standard. It is now obvious that declines in Nigerian quality of education are below the levels required for a meaningful development. If nothing is done to remedy the situation, Nigeria will perpetually remain a developing nation with dependence on foreign countries for the supply of goods and services that require the use of simple technologies. Such a situation will deny many an opportunity for a quality living.

Consequently, implementation strategies will have to be redefined so that the flaws in the educational system can be removed (Okoroma 2007). Funding of education must be improved so as to place education where it belongs. Okoroma (2007) concluded that with recommendation of the UNESCO that at least 26% of a nation's budget be allocated to education was based on a careful analysis and is necessary for the achievement and maintenance of acceptable standards. Nigeria must accept and implement the recommendation to savage and upgrade the quality of Nigerian education which is perhaps due to under-funding.

Ojedokun and Aladejana (2012) in their paper on standards responsible for the decline in Quality of Secondary education in Nigeria clarifies issues surrounding the misplacement of standard as against quality when examining the success or failure of secondary education on yearly basis. The paper

Table 1. Frequency table of sample used from the four universities.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Ahmadu Bello University	100	25.0	25.0	25.0
	Bayero University	100	25.0	25.0	50.0
	Federal University Dutse	100	25.0	25.0	75.0
	Federal University Katsina	100	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey, (2016).

Table 2. The level of education of the respondents.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Degree	260	65.0	65.0	65.0
	Masters	104	26.0	26.0	91.0
	PhD	36	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Sources: Survey, (2016).

concludes that the standard of education has not fallen in Nigeria, but that the quality of education is vast declining and all stakeholders in the education have a lot of roles to play to get the quality back on track.

Theoretical clarification

Among other characteristics of open system such as input, output, dynamic homeostasis, and equifinality is the cycle of event. Cycle of events states that, "If there is continuous inflow of input factors from the environment into the system, there would be continuous outflow of output from the system back into the environment". However, it should be noted that the quality of input factor determines the quality of outputs. This is because it is not possible for any teacher to give what he/she do not have, brilliant teacher are more likely to produce brilliant graduates. Input factors needed in the school as a cycle of event means raw materials required for the school production process such as student enrolment, qualified teachers, instructional materials, quality assurance, infrastructural facilities, teachers employment, good teaching method, effective school administrator, effective counseling programs, students motivation and teachers motivation through regular payment of teachers' salary.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts descriptive survey design using the students and lecturers of Federal Universities of Northwest zone as the population of the study. There are seven (7) states in the Northwest zone of Nigeria. These states include; Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara. Stratified random sampling

technique was used to draw Four hundred respondents from the four selected Universities as the Sample used for the Study. A self-made questionnaire entitled "Questionnaire on falling standard of education in Nigeria (QFSEN)" was used to collect data from 400 respondents from the four selected Universities based on Krcyie and Morgan 1970 table of sample size. The research instrument was subjected to scrutiny by research experts in Bayero University Kano and Northwest University, Kano in order to establish its validity. The instrument was subjected to Cronbact's Alpha Reliability test and the reliability coefficient was found to be 0.85. The data collected was analyzed using, mean(x), t-test, and correlation coefficient(r) statistical tools.

RESULTS

Four of the Seven Federal Universities of Northwest zone States were used for the study. The Universities used and percentage of respondents in which the questionnaires were administered are presented in the frequency Table 1.

From Table 1, it is shown that out of four hundred respondents used for the study, 25% of the sample used were drawn from each of the four Universities used for the study.

Looking at the Table 2, one can conclude that out of four hundred respondents used for the study, two hundred and sixty (260) respondents were first degree holders, one hundred and four (104) were master degree holders and thirty six (36) were PhD holders.

From Table 3, one can observe that out of four hundred respondents used for the study, two hundred and sixty eight (268) of the respondents used for the study were

Table 3. The sample used based on gender distributions.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Male	268	67.0	67.0	67.0
	Female	132	33.0	33.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Sources: Survey, (2016).

Table 4. The sample used based on position of the respondents.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Lecturer	120	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Student	280	70.0	70.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Sources: Survey, (2016).

Table 5. Standard of Federal Universities in Northwest zone has not fallen.

S/N		A	U	D	%A	%D
1.	Teacher-students ratio in Federal Universities as stated in the NPE has not been officially increased by the government.	286	66	48	71.5%	12%
2.	Minimum Lecturer qualification in Federal Universities has not been reduced from Masters to First degree.	292	44	64	73%	16%
3.	Government has not compromised the role of library in teaching and learning in Federal Universities.	196	70	134	49%	33.5%
4.	Government has not compromised the role of laboratory in the teaching of science in Federal Universities.	204	58	138	51%	34.5%
5.	Government has not compromised the criteria for admission of students into Federal Universities.	232	36	132	58%	33%
Total	Universal Percentage(UP)				60.5%	25.8%

Source: Field survey (2016).

male while one hundred and thirty two (132) were female. This is further explained in Table 4.

From Table 4, it is clear that one hundred and twenty (120) respondents were lecturers while two hundred and eighty (280) were students.

Answering the research questions

Question One: What is the perception of respondents on falling standard or decline in quality of education in Federal University in the Northwest zone of Nigeria?

From the Table 5, the UP of respondents agreed is higher (60.5%) than those disagreed (25.8%). One could then conclude that standard of education in Federal Universities in the Northwest zone of Nigeria has not fallen but the quality is declining.

Question Two: What are the evidences of decline in quality of education in Federal Universities in the Northwest zone of Nigeria?

From the Table 6, one could conclude that there are two major evidences of decline in quality of Federal

Universities in Northwest zone Nigeria. These include: Inability of all graduates of Federal Universities in Northwest zone to speak English language fluently and inadequate practical skills needed in the world of work among graduates of Federal Universities in Northwest zone, Nigeria.

Question Three: What are the causes of decline in quality of education in Federal Universities in the Northwest zone of Nigeria?

From the Table 7, it could be realized that the causes of decline in qualities of Federal Universities of Northwest zone of Nigeria includes the following: Over reliance on theory rather than practicals in Federal Universities of Northwest zone, Nigeria; Inadequate funding of Federal Universities infrastructures; Inadequate employment of qualified lecturers; Inadequate training and retraining of lecturers and Negative attitude of students and lecturers to study and work respectively.

Question Four: What are the economic implications of decline in quality of education in Federal Universities in the Northwest zone of Nigeria?

From the Table 8, the economic implications of

Table 6. Evidences of declining quality of Federal Universities in Northwest zone of Nigeria.

S/N		A	U	D	%A	%D
1.	Graduates of Federal Universities in Northwest zone are not all qualified for employment	110	40	250	27.5%	62.5%
2.	Not all graduates of Federal Universities in Northwest zone can speak English fluently	286	40	74	71.5%	18.5%
3.	Not all graduates of Federal Universities in Northwest zone possessed practical skills needed in the world of work	282	44	74	70.5%	18.5%
4.	Students are not performing well in external academic competitions	152	66	182	38%	45.5%
5.	Students are not performing well in the school examinations.	120	50	230	30%	57.5%
Total	Universal percentage				47.5%	40.5%

Source: Field survey (2016).

Table 7. Causes of declining quality of Federal Universities in Northwest zone of Nigeria.

S/N		A	U	D	%A	%D
1.	There is over reliance on theory rather than practical's in Federal Universities of Northwest zone, Nigeria.	344	14	42	86%	10.5%
2.	There is inadequate funding of Federal Universities infrastructures.	334	32	34	83.5%	8.5%
3.	There is inadequate employment of qualified lecturers.	296	36	68	74%	17%
4.	There is inadequate training and retraining of lecturers.	322	32	46	80.5%	11.5%
5.	There is negative attitude of students and lecturers to study and work respectively.	246	58	96	61.5%	24%
Total	Universal percentage				77.1%	14.3%

Source: Field survey, (2016).

Table 8. Implications of declining quality of Federal Universities in Northwest zone of Nigeria.

S/N		A	U	D	%A	%D
1.	Decline in quality of education causes unemployment.	300	32	68	75%	17%
2.	There is Social insecurity which leads to loss of lives and properties in Northwest zone, Nigeria.	328	32	40	82%	10%
3.	There is Reduction in government revenue expected from workers tax in Northwest zone, Nigeria.	264	80	56	66%	14%
4.	There is Poor quality of goods and services in Northwest zone, Nigeria.	280	44	76	70%	19%
5.	There is Reduction in personal savings and investments among the Northwest zone inhabitants.	244	60	96	61%	24%
Total	Universal percentage				70.8%	16.8%

Source: Field survey (2016).

decline in quality of education in Federal Universities in Northwest zone of Nigeria include the following: Unemployment; Social insecurity; loss of lives and properties; reduction in government revenue expected from workers tax; poor quality of goods and services and reduction in personal savings and investments.

Question Five: What are the suggestions to the problem of decline in quality of education in Federal Universities in the Northwest zone of Nigeria?

From the Table 9, item with 50% and above are the remedies to decline in quality of education in Federal Universities of Northwest zone, Nigeria.

Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference on respondents' perceptions on falling standard or decline in quality of education in Federal Universities in the Northwest zone of Nigeria (Table 10).

Looking at the Table 10 of the critical ratio of falling

Table 9. Suggestions to Declining Quality of Federal Universities in Northwest zone of Nigeria.

S/N		A	U	D	%A	%D
1.	Involvement of public private partnership in financing Federal Universities of Northwest zone Universities will prevent decline in quality of education.	348	20	32	87%	8%
2.	Qualified Lecturers should be employed to prevent decline in quality of education.	380	20	0	95%	0%
3.	Training and retraining of Lecturers should be the government's utmost priority to reduce decline in quality of education.	380	12	8	95%	2%
4.	There should be adequate inspection and supervision of Federal Universities of Northwest zone to reduce decline in quality of education.	396	4	0	99%	0%
5.	Government should provide adequate infrastructural facilities, instructional materials and laboratories for Federal Universities of Northwest Zone Universities to reduce decline in quality of education.	396	0	4	99%	1%
Total	Universal percentage				95%	2.2%

Source: Field survey, (2016).

Table 10. Critical ratio of falling standard of education based on lecturers' and students' perceptions.

Variable	Residential area	N	Mean	S.D	't' value	Remarks at 5% level of significance
Perceptions	Lecturers	120	74.79	6.876	0.030	NS
	Students	280	74.81	7.291		

Table value 1.945; Source: Field Survey (2016).

Table 11. ANOVA for the perceptions based on level of education that is Degree, Masters, and PhD.

Sources	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F – value	Table value	Remarks at 5% level of significance
Between	114.323	2	57.162	1.115	3.02	NS
Within	20343.854	397	51.244			

Source: Field Survey (2016).

Table 12. Perception of the respondents' based on gender.

Variables	N	'r' value		Remarks at 5% level of significance
		Calculated value	Table value	
Perception based on Gender	400	0.104	0.234	NS

Source: Field Survey (2016).

standard of education based on lecturers and students perceptions, it is quite shown that table value (1.945) is greater than the calculated value (0.030). Hence, the null hypothesis is retained.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference on the respondents' level of education and their perceptions on evidences of decline in quality of Education in Federal Universities in the Northwest zone of Nigeria (Table 11).

From the Table 11, it is shown that table value (3.02) is higher than the calculated value (1.115). Hence, there is no significant difference on the respondents' perceptions across their levels of education. Thereby, the null hypothesis is retained.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference across gender on the causes of decline in quality of education in

Federal Universities in the Northwest zone of Nigeria (Table 12).

From this Table 12, one could deduce that the table value of (0.234) is greater than the calculated value (0.104). Thus, the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference across gender on the causes of decline in quality of education in Federal Universities of Northwest zone, Nigeria" is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference across gender on the causes of decline in Quality of Federal University in Northwest zone Nigeria.

Summary of major findings

Based on the data collected and analyzed using the appropriate statistical tools, the following major findings

could be deduced;

i.) Students and Lecturers perceived that Standard of Education in Northwest zone University has not fallen but there is noticeable decline in Quality of Education in terms of poor academic achievement and poor graduate performances.

ii.) There is no significant difference across the respondents' level of education and their perception that the two major characteristics of decline in quality of Education in Federal Universities of Northwest zone, Nigeria include; Inability of all graduates of Federal Universities in Northwest zone of Nigeria to speak English language fluently and Inadequate practical skills needed in the world of work among graduates of Federal Universities in Northwest zone, Nigeria.

iii.) The major causes of decline in qualities of Education in Federal Universities of Northwest zone of Nigeria include: Over reliance on theory rather than practicals in Federal Universities of Northwest zone, Nigeria; Inadequate funding of Federal Universities infrastructural facilities; Inadequate employment of qualified lecturers; Inadequate training and retraining of lecturers; Negative attitude of students and lecturers to study and work respectively.

iv.) Economics implications of decline in quality of education in Federal Universities of Northwest zone of Nigeria include the following: Unemployment; Social insecurity; loss of lives and properties; Reduction in government revenue expected from workers tax; Poor quality of goods and services; and Reduction in personal savings and investments.

Discussions of the findings

Contemplating on the statement of Okoroma (2007) that a problem well defined is half solved, so the problem of Nigerian education should be well defined. Examining this, Nigerian observer (2008) opined that, the issue of the quality of Education in Nigeria should be critically analyzed before determining whether or not the standard has fallen. On this Background, It is evident that findings have been made resulting from data generated for the field. Thus, it was discovered that Students and Lecturers perceived that Standard of Education in Northwest zone University has not fallen but there is noticeable decline in Quality of Education in terms of poor academic achievement and poor graduate performances. This is in line with Ochuba (2009) who differentiates between standard and quality that, "standard is the input and quality is the output and so, it is a wrong perception and assessment that the standard of education is falling in Nigeria. The finding is contrary to Borisade (2013), who stated that the standard of education has fallen drastically as a result of factors militating against the school system

in terms of funding, political will staffing, environmental factors etc. Bello (2010) trying to be neutral by saying that falling standard of Education is a relative term, because there is no well-defined instrument to measure it with utmost reliability and validity.

There is no significant difference across the respondents' level of education and their perception that the two major characteristics of decline in quality of Education in Federal Universities of Northwest zone, Nigeria include; Inability of all graduates to speak English language fluently and Inadequate practical skills needed in the world of work among graduates. This finding is supported by Chinelo (2011) that when appropriate skills are lacking in any production system, the outcome is poor quality, which undermines capacity building and sustainable development in any nation.

The major causes of decline in qualities of Education in Federal Universities of Northwest zone of Nigeria include over reliance on theory rather than practical in Federal Universities of Northwest zone, Nigeria. These include but not limited to; Inadequate funding of Federal Universities infrastructural facilities; Inadequate employment of qualified lecturers; Inadequate training and retraining of lecturers; and Negative attitude of students and lecturers to study and work respectively. According to Arong and Ogbadu (2010), the causes of decline in quality of education include but not limited to; Lack of qualify teachers; Lack of Instructional materials; Inadequate library facilities; Poor remuneration for teachers; Poor attitudes of students/pupils towards learning; Lack of parental responsibilities; Misplaced priority on education by Government; Corruption or lack of integrity among some education stake-holder/workers.

However, Dantata (2013) attributed reasons for decline in quality of education in Nigeria Universities to incessant strike by University staff, inadequate funding and youth bad attitude to the pursuit of knowledge. By this, there is a correlation between the findings of this study and that of Dantata (2013). Supporting the finding of this study on poor attitude of students and Lecturer to learning and teaching, Babalola (2006) avowed that poor attendance of students at lectures and at other academic programme was too much and the Lecturers don't take student attendance seriously. Emphasizing on learners' poor attitude to learning, Chinelo (2011) states that another striking reason is students' poor reading culture. She stated further that today, over 70% of students at any level of our educational ladder do not know how to read, whether for pleasure or for academic purpose. Lamenting on the Lecturers part of the bargain of poor attitude, Akintunde (2011) believed that non-dedication of teacher (Lecturers inclusive) constitutes a major factor of falling standard of education in Nigeria. Similarly, Chinelo (2011) opined that reasons adduced for the falling standard of education in Nigeria include decline in competence and commitment of teachers.

However, decline in quality of education in Federal Universities of Northwest zone Nigeria have many implications. But, this study was interested in the economic implications. This was due to the economic recession that the country was battling with at the inception of this research work. Hence, the study revealed the Economic implications of decline in quality of education in Federal Universities of Northwest zone of Nigeria to include: Unemployment; Social insecurity; loss of lives and properties; Reduction in government revenue expected from workers tax; Poor quality of goods and services; and Reduction in personal savings and investments.

Conclusions

This study sought to investigate the popular falling standard of education in Federal Universities of Northwest zone Nigeria. The review of literature shows that the scholars were divided into three groups. The first group agreed that standard of education in Nigeria has fallen, the second group stood neutral by saying both are same, it is only a matter of nomenclature while the third group believes that the problems of Nigerian education is better expressed as the menace of decline in quality of education and not falling standard. The findings of this research supported that standard of education in Federal Universities in Northwest zone Nigeria has not fallen but the Quality is declining. This is nothing but the quality of products in terms of graduate performance and student's academic achievements.

This is hinged on the fact that Standard of Education here refers to the guidelines such as Teacher Pupils Ratios (TPRs), Minimum Teaching Qualifications (MTQs) and a host of others established by the Government. These elements of Standard were clearly inscribed into the National Policy on Education to ensure quality of Education. Hereby, mentioning falling standard of education is synonymous to saying that the Government has increased the TPRs of 1:35 in Primary Schools to 1:50 and MTQs from NCE to Secondary School Certificate in the same Primary Schools, etc.

The characteristics of decline in quality of Education include that not all graduates of Federal Universities in Northwest zone Nigeria can speak English Language fluently and not all of them possess the practical skills needed in the world of work. This could be held responsible for high level of retraining expenditures usually embarked by the employers of labour in Nigeria. The same decline could also be linked to poor goods and services in Nigerian market and the artificial unemployment and lack of self-reliance that has brought Nigerian economy to its knees. By this, it is believed that if the recommendation of this study is implemented, Northwest zone socio-economic development may

improve and Nigerian economy in general may escape from its recession. This may also catapult Nigeria from its developing stage to a developed nation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made to guide the Nigerian Education stakeholders. It is believed that if these recommendations are implemented to a degree, Federal Universities in Northwest zone Nigeria may improve in quality.

- i.) Vice Chancellors of Northwest zone Universities should involve public private partnership in their Institutional financing.
- ii.) Qualified Lecturers should be employed
- iii.) Training and retraining of Lecturers should be the government's utmost priority;
- iv.) There should be adequate inspection and supervision of Federal Universities of Northwest zone, Nigeria.
- v.) Government should provide adequate infrastructural facilities, instructional materials and laboratories for Federal Universities of Northwest zone Universities to reduce decline in quality of education.

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