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Products of Primary Education: Asset to Societal Development, a Link to Basic Decision Making

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Abstract - This study examined the product of primary education as asset to societal development and a link to basic decision making. The subject (180) primary six pupils and 90 primary school teachers were drawn from the schools that were involved in the study. The study was a descriptive one in which the ex-post facto survey method was used. Thee different instruments were used. They are: English Language Achievement Test (ELAT), Primary Mathematics Achievement Test (PMAT) and the Teachers' questionnaire. The results showed that the products of primary school education are useful to themselves and to the society at large (Chi squared calculated = 72.80, df = 2; $p < 0.05$). The study further established government intentions to make products of primary education functional and productive citizens/ members of the society (Chi squared calculated = 18.07, df = 2; $p<0.05$). Recommendations were made based on the outcome of the study..

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I. Introduction

The inception of primary school education was fully packaged and associated with meaningful and laudable reasons and ideas. Though the main reason behind the Western world's establishment of primary school education could be seen as for the selfish purpose. Obanya (2003) and Afe (1990) in Komolafe (2000, 2010) identified the critical role of primary school education even before independence as a national system of education that perfectly suit the needs of its citizenry and making it development-oriented. Nigeria, like many other countries of the world, has through her universal primary education programmes and policies (NPE, 2004) have been providing equal educational opportunities for all her citizens. This is why government at the federal, states and local levels has always made substantial efforts to make primary education available and accessible to all children of school age irrespective of their geographical location, religion, socio-economic status and political affiliations (Komolafe, 2010).

The universal primary education programme of the Old Western Region in 1955, the National UPE programme in 1976 and the current Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme have made some appreciable impact on the expansion of primary education in Nigeria in order to provide its' citizens with human capabilities as observed by Sen 1999 which are essential both to the members of the society and for the development of the nation. In Afe's view, he explains that what is normally ignored about Nigeria education through the missionary is centred on the fact that "the zeal for missionary endeavour coincide with European interest in the commercial and political drive to penetrate the interior of the African continent'. He further revealed that to believe that the missionaries connived with the traders and explorers to exploit the people under the disguise of making them Christian converts could be erroneous. Thus the Bible and the plough were seen to be complimentary Taiwo (1980) opines that:

> "In short, the aims of the Christian missions generally were the Bible and the plough (this was the famous slogan from the memorable statement by Thomas Fowell Buxton" it is the Bible and the plough that must regenerate Africa as well as the development of the local languages and the identification and training of evangelical leaders".

With reference to what Boyd (1961) cited by Afe (1990), the assertions of Taiwo (1980) and Osokoya (1989) and also considering what Akinbote, Oduolowu and Lawal (2001) revealed, it could invariably be deduced that, the missionaries purpose of education were nothing short of the aim of church of the dark ages, which was education provided not because the church regarded education as good in itself but because the clergy and his loyalists needed as much of the formal learning as was required for the study of the sacred writings and reading of the Bible. At that stage products of primary schools were basically seen as the clergy's assistants or the catechists and they were also part of the church decision making body who contributed to the church development. It was observed then that some of these products became teachers, church clerks, interpreters in the government service and the commercial houses, while others became artisans such as tailors, carpenters and bricklayers.

Thus, Taiwo (1980) revealed that:

> "It is kept alive by constant attention to the educational content and the structure of the system, the quality of the final product from the institutions, the main goals of education, the relevance of education to the manpower needs of the country, the quality of the teachers, the religion and moral tone of the schools and the employability and the employment opportunities of their pupils".

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At that time, initially the population of educators were very few, coupled with the refusal of the then Nigerian government to be involved in education, thereby giving those who sponsored education the optimum opportunity to reap its products to meet its target.

The interest of Nigeria government in education according to Ogunni (1990) was first indicated in 1877 when the Lagos administration of the British colonial office made grants of two hundred British pounds (£200) to each of the 3 missionary societies in charge of education then. This began the involvement of government financial support after three decades after the commencement of the westernized education in the country. However, it could not be ascertained if the government has been gaining from the education of its nation neither could there be any denial of this. It could, therefore be deduced that government must have been realizing and enjoying the dividends of education through its products, otherwise, the promulgation of different ordinances and policies on education starting from 1882 Education Ordinance to the present Universal Basic Education (UBE) (1999) programme culminating in the National Policy on Education of 2004 would not have been necessary nor received government's attention.

These are (policies and programmes) the means government has been using to elicit information, instruction and even to identify difficulties and problems facing primary school education. There was no doubt that there were a lot of achievement through these means which at the end have been highlighting the educational desire in which the expectations of the primary education were clearly written. The products of primary education today as far as Nigeria is concerned is expected to be functional member of the society even if such citizen formal education terminates at the primary school level. This is why this paper examined if the products of primary school education are asset to societal development in decision making. It also focused on how far the primary education through States' Universal Basic Education Boards have been able to achieve the set up goals and the pursued objectives that would change Nigeria to a 'royal model' as acclaimed by Yoloye (1998).

II. Methodology Hypotheses

This study sought answers to the following null hypotheses.

1. Government does not intend to make primary school education functional for its productive citizens.
2. The products of primary school education are not useful to themselves and to the society at large.

The total number of 180 primary 6 pupils of both sexes from 6 schools were selected randomly from the local government area that participated in the study. The instruments were achievement tests on literacy (English Language) and numeracy (mathematics). The achievement tests were administered to the pupils to test their performance and competence as primary school products. Also, 90 primary school teachers were selected purposively and used for the study taking into consideration vital information such as teaching method, area of specialization, year of experience, qualification and teacher-pupil ratio.

The design of this study is ex-post-facto and descriptive. The design is 3x2x2 ex-post-facto factorial design, with the lay-out below in figure 1.1

3x2x2 Factorial Design

	L		N	
TQ	M	F	M	F
TR	M	F	M	F
T/PR	M	F	M	F

Where:

TQ, TR, T/PR are some of the policy statements.
TQ represents – Teacher's qualification
TR represents – Teacher's experiences
T/PR represents – Teacher-pupil ratio

The study has three distinct variables, which are the dependent variable – Achievement in both literacy and numeracy test.

Independent variable which is the policy statements, which are: teachers' qualification, teacher's roles and teacher-pupil ratio and the moderator variable which is gender manipulated at 2 levels – Male and Female.

The three instruments were validated using Kuder-Richardson 21 (KR-21) method to calculate their reliability. The English Language Achievement Test (ELAT) reliability coefficient was 0.72, the Primary Mathematics Achievement Test (PMAT) has the coefficient of 0.68 while Teacher's perception questionnaire (TPQ) has the reliability coefficient of 0.59.

The data was collected, analysed and explained using chi-square and simple percentage.

III. Results

Table 1 : Chi-square of Teacher's Opinion on the Government Intention to make Primary Education Products Functions

Category	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	Residual
1	49	30.00	19.00
2	21	30.00	-9.00
3	20	30.00	-10.00
Total	90	90.00	0.00

X^2 calculated = 18.07; D.f = 2, Significance = 0.0001.

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Null Hypothesis, HO: Government does not intend to make primary education functional for its productive citizens.

Reject HO, since, X^2 calculated = 18.07 > X^2 table (2, 0.05) = 4.60 at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 2 : Chi-square of Teacher's Opinion on the Government Intention to make Functional Primary Education Products Functional

Category	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	Residual
1	49	30.00	19.00
2	21	30.00	-9.00
3	20	30.00	-10.00
Total	90	90.00	0.00

X^2 calculated = 18.07; D.f = 2, Significance = 0.0001.

Decision Rule:

Reject H_O, since, X^2 calculated = 18.07 > X^2 table (2, 0.05) = 4.60 at 0.05 level of significance.

The results showed that government has intention of making primary education functional for its productive citizens.

Table 3 : Chi-square of Teacher's Opinion on the Usefulness of Products of Primary Education to themselves and to the society at large

Category	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	Residual
1	8	30.00	-22.00
2	68	30.00	38.00
3	14	30.00	-16.00
Total	90	90.00	0.00

X^2 calculated = 72.80; > X^2 table (2, 0.05)= 4.60.

H_O is rejected because of X^2 cal is greater than the table X^2 value, that is X^2 calculated = 72.80 > X^2 table = 4.60 at 0.05 level of significance. This simply implies that the products of primary education are useful to themselves and also to the society to a large extent.

IV. Conclusion

This study has examined the products of primary education in Oyo State in order to see the level of achieved objectives. It also found out what the primary education product can do as functional member of the society in order to support the immediate environment and the society at large.

From the findings, it was revealed that teachers' qualification in primary school has significant effect on their (pupils) achievement both in literacy and numeracy. This buttressed the stated policy in the NPE (2004) that the inculcation or permanent literacy and numeracy, the first of the objectives of primary education can be achieved.

The study also established government intention at making primary education functional and productive, to its citizens. Apart from this, the policy recommends that primary education should be made functional by the government. The result funding on this statement showed that apart from the fact that the product of primary education are functional both to themselves and to the society to a large extent, the study shows and stresses the intention of government at making primary education more functional for its productive citizens. This is why government recently has taken into considerations measures such as employment of trained and qualified teachers, salary increment, inform of improved teacher's salary scale, and other incentives, regular and intensive supervision by the school supervisors from the monitoring unit in the Ministry of Education and some other beneficial measures in order to promote this, and most importantly, the 9 years basic education programme all at ensuring that the foundation for further studies is solidly laid at this level. Finally, the pupils' literacy level does not affect their numeracy level.

It is therefore recommended that government should intensify more effort at making her intention known to the general public through enlightenment/ awareness programme in order to sensitize all and sundry on the importance of this level of education in order to make its' products functional. This could be realized through immediate and prompt execution of their intention, up-to-date record keeping of their achievement, proper monitoring and periodical evaluation of primary education objectives.

In addition, government should make provision for the products of primary education who for one reason or the other could not go beyond this level of education by creating more job opportunities suitable for this level of school leavers so that they will be useful to themselves and the general public at large.

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