Hassles and Panacea to Educational Researches in South-South Nigeria

Dokubo N. Isaac, PhD
Dokubo Chivuikem Isaac
Department of Science and Technical Education, Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Rivers State, Nigeria

Abstract

This study examined the problems affecting educational researches in South-South Nigeria. The research work was conducted at the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers state (UNIPORT); Niger Delta University, Amasoma, Bayelsa state (NDU); and the University of Calabar, Cross Rivers state (UNICAL). Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population for the study was 3000 which comprised of final year students and academic staff in the above mentioned institutions. A sample size of 600 was drawn from the population. Four research questions guided the study. A 30-item questionnaire was developed and administered. The study revealed governmental factors, tertiary institutional factors, and researchers' factors affecting educational researches in South-South Nigeria. Recommendations were made such as: the various state governments should improve on the security condition in their respective regions; the managements of the South-South tertiary institutions should encourage lecturers to carry out researches by making funds available to them through Tertiary Education Trust (TET) fund; e-libraries should be introduced, etc.

Keywords: Educational research, hassles, panacea, Challenges, South-South Nigeria

Introduction

Research is the process of arriving at desired solutions to problems by means of a well-planned and systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. Research, according to Osuala (2005), is tilted "towards the discovery and determination of the relationships that is existing among the phenomena of the world in which they occur" (p.1). In making his own contributions, Akaninwor (2014) opined that "research is very important because no nation

can survive without it" (P.1). When we seek a solution to any educational problem, it often leads to educational research.

Consequently, educational research can also be regarded as an activity designed to evolve theories guiding the principles and practice of education. It attempts to use the methods and procedures made popular in the physical sciences to find answers to problems facing the education industry. Educational researches as well as research of all kinds, indeed, are almost as old as man on earth. All that have changed over the years due to the approaches or methodologies employed in research activities. The need to carry out investigations and evolve new theories is one of the most fundamental functions of the corps of the intelligentsia of any particular society. Similarly, the place of such research activities in the developmental processes and efforts of any society has also been recognized. However, this is why special attention has been paid to research and documentation by countries that have been eager to develop technologically.

Whether you are a current student or a doctoral graduate, conducting a research is an integral part of being a scholar-practitioner coupled with the skills and credibility of effecting economic and social changes.

Shehu (1998) shows that with the incessant changes of the political system in our country, coupled with the resultant instability, inconsistency, and incoherence in the modus operandi of our governmental policies and programmes, the participants in the education industry, especially the researchers, have been left confounded. Before the researcher concludes an evaluative study on a particular programme or policy, it is either discarded or replaced with a different, sometimes completely divergent policy or programme. Political instability has also taken its toll on the educational and research institutes in Nigeria. In addition, the academic calendar is frequently disrupted due to strike actions. Other aspects of the situation are the lockouts, closures, and general social upheavals - and all these can influence the orientation, timing, process, and the quality of any research activity in the field of education. Dokubo (2015) indicated that strike actions embarked upon by labour unions in various tertiary institutions in Nigeria escalated to levels where there were breakdowns in the cordial relationship between the academic staff and the non-academic staff unions of various tertiary institutions in the South- South region of Nigeria. The action in itself is desired to mount pressure on the management to effect changes in the bargaining structure of the universities. The strike action has direct impact on the researchers and the target time for the conclusion of their works. Moreover, loss of lives, time, materials, and equipment may be experienced if the conflict is not properly handled (Dokubo, 2015, p.27-28).

The South-South states of Nigeria (Delta, Edo, Bayelsa, Rivers, Cross Rivers, and Akwa Ibom) are not immune to these problems. Therefore, these challenges affecting researches in the region of Niger Delta is attributable to societal factors, governmental factors, researcher's factors, and tertiary institutional factors. Hence, this study aims to find out the challenges affecting educational researches in South-South Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

The complex nature of the decisions to be made and the magnitude of the issues facing the people of South-South Nigeria are such that a systematic procedure is required. This is in a bid to ensure that decisions are made as much and as quick as possible with available data and facts. Consequently, present day decision making is too capital intensive. Sometimes, what are required in everyday decisions are not right or wrong answers, but an intelligent decision that comes about through research works (Osuala, 2005). Furthermore, the importance of security in an area where a research is to be conducted cannot be overemphasized. Dokubo (2010) stated that the role of the physical, social, psychological and learning environments are of immense relevance in educational programmes. Due to the current security threats in the various South-South states of Nigeria such as kidnappings, communal clashes and cultism, a researcher's life is put at great risk. Due to the above problems which have been grouped under governmental, researcher's and tertiary institutional factors have motivated the researcher to undertake this study in order to ascertain their impacts on educational research in the tertiary institutions of South-South Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

This study aims to identify the problems in educational research in tertiary institutions in South-South Nigeria. Specifically, the study will unravel the following:

1. The governmental factors affecting educational researches in South-South Nigeria.

2. The researcher's factors affecting educational researches in South-South Nigeria.

3. The tertiary institutional factors affecting educational researches in South-South Nigeria.

4. The strategies for tackling the hindrances to educational researches in South-South Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study aimed at providing answers to these questions:

1. What are the governmental factors affecting educational researches in South-South Nigeria?

2. What are the researcher's factors affecting educational researches in South-South Nigeria?

3. What are the tertiary institutional factors affecting educational researches in South-South Nigeria?

4. What are the strategies for tackling the hindrances to educational researches in South-South Nigeria?

Significance of the study

The findings of this study will be beneficial to the various South-South state Ministries of Education, lecturers, students, and future researchers. The southern Nigerian state Ministries of Education will benefit from the findings of the study since they will showcase the problems affecting educational researches in the region. Thus, in turn, this will enable government and relevant stake holders to properly address the matter. Also, the states' tertiary institution administrators will also benefit from the findings. This would make them to become aware and sensitised on the problems that has negative effects on researches in South-South Nigeria. In addition, the lecturers teaching in the various institutions of higher learning will derive benefits as well, since the findings of the study will expose the problems in South-South Nigeria with suggestions on how to tackle them. Future researchers too in similar fields of interest will gain relevant information for judicious use in their works when they handle this research piece.

Methodology
Research design

The researcher adopted the descriptive survey research design. According to Nwankwo (2013), the thrust in the use of this design is that certain features or variables are merely described as they are at that particular time.

Population

The population of the study was 3000. It comprises of all final year students in the 2015/2016 academic session and all academic staff of the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers state (UNIPORT); Niger Delta University, Amasoma, Bayelsa state (NDU), and University of Calabar, Cross Rivers state (UNICAL).

Sample and sampling technique

Stratified random sampling technique was used to sample 600 respondents, which comprised of 100 lecturers and 500 students.

Instrument for data collection

The instrument used for the study was a carefully constructed questionnaire using a five point Likert rating scale titled "Constraints to Educational Researches in South-South Nigeria" (CERSSNQ) with two parts. However, part one contained the respondent's bio data, while part two had four sections (Sections A-D). Section A was on governmental factors, section B was on researcher's factors, section C was on Institutional factors, and section D was based on the strategies for tackling the hindrances to educational researches in South-South Nigeria. Section A, B, C, D had 9, 7, 6, 8 items respectively, making up a total of 30 items in the questionnaire.

Validation and reliability of the instrument

The questionnaire was validated by three statistical and research experts. Corrections and alterations were made to the questionnaires and the amendments were done by the researchers. The Cronbach's Alpha correlation technique was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument, which yielded 0.90. Thus, this implies that the instrument was reliable.

Method of data analysis

Data derived from the field were analyzed using mean, standard deviation. Mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the research questions. All the calculated mean of items with value from 3.50 and above were considered as "agree"; mean values less than 3.50 but greater than 2.40 (i.e. 2.50-3.40) were considered as "undecided"; while mean values for items that were less than 2.5 (i.e. 0-2.40) were considered as "disagree". Mean values of 3.50 and above were accepted, while mean values ranging from 2.5-3.4 were taken as "undecided". In addition, calculated mean values of 0-2.40 were rejected.

Results, data analysis, and discussion
Research Question 1

What are the government factors affecting educational researches in South-South Nigeria?

Table 1. Government factors affecting educational researches in South-South Nigeria

		LECTURERS N=100			STUDENTS N=500		
		X	SD	DECISION	X	SD	DECISION
1.	Inadequate funding of schools	4.8	0.41	AGREE	4.46	0.93	AGREE
2.	Non provision of adequate security	4.2	0.89	AGREE	4.11	0.47	AGREE
3.	Secrecy in governmental agencies	4.35	0.49	AGREE	4.46	0.50	AGREE
4.	Irregular supervision of tertiary institutions	4.5	0.51	AGREE	4.38	0.40	AGREE

	X	SD	DECISION	X	SD	DECISION
5. Poor road network for research field trips	4.1	1.07	AGREE	3.54	1.2	AGREE
6. Shortage of research institutes	4.15	0.75	AGREE	4.77	0.42	AGREE
7. Lack of clear-cut educational policies	4.8	0.41	AGREE	4.11	0.47	AGREE
8. Difficulty in accessing research funds	4.46	0.50	AGREE	4.32	0.5	AGREE
9. Political Instability	3.85	1.12	AGREE	3.72	0.96	AGREE

The table 1 above shows that both lecturers and students accepted the above mentioned 9 items as governmental factors negatively affecting the conduct of educational researches in South-South Nigeria. Shehu (1998) stated that "the resources available for research are grossly inadequate just as the case of too many other African countries; even when special funds are provided for research, they are too inadequate to meet the research needs of Nigeria" (p. 3).

Osuala (2005) further stated that "the dearth of research centres, workshops, laboratories, and computers in West Africa make the work of researchers difficult and, on other occasions, inconclusive" (p.11). This also is in line with Okoh (2002) who opined that intellectual efforts are not appreciated as much as monetary achievements or material gains. Osuala (2005) mentioned that "even in governmental ministries, information that otherwise should be for public consumption is considered as secret." (p. 9). Osuala (2005) further stated that scanty statistics is also a major issue affecting researches as many policy makers think it is a waste of time thinking of research when there are other matters to handle.

Research Question 2

What are the researcher's factors affecting educational researches in South-South Nigeria?

Table 2. Mean responses on the researcher's factors affecting educational researches in South-South Nigeria

	LECTURERS N=100			STUDENTS N=500		
	$\overline{X}$	SD	DECISION	X	SD	DECISION
10. Lack of research skills	3.95	1.23	AGREE	3.46	1.51	UNDECIDED
11. Laziness/fatigue	2.85	1.42	UNDECIDED	4.77	0.42	AGREE
12. Illiteracy	1.85	1.04	DISAGREE	4.12	1.22	AGREE
13. High rate of indiscipline	4.15	1.18	AGREE	3.77	1.32	AGREE
14. Non challant attitude towards studies	4.4	0.68	AGREE	4.32	1.16	AGREE

15. Fear of the region	4.1	1.32	AGREE	3.89	1.29	AGREE
16. Poor inter-personal relationship with lecturers.	3.77	1.03	AGREE	3.85	1.14	AGREE

The table 2 above shows that lecturers accepted items no. 10 and 13-16 as researcher's factors affecting educational researches in South-South Nigeria. They were undecided on item 11 and disagreed with item 12 as a factor affecting educational researches in South-South Nigeria. The students were undecided on item 10, but agreed with items 11-16 as researcher's factors affecting educational researches in South-South Nigeria. This agrees with Osuala (2005), who says that empirical research requires the ability to read in order to answer questions accurately. He further stated that there is a lack of research skills as many prospective and potential researchers have devoted their skills to alternative careers.

Research Question 3

What are the tertiary institutional factors affecting educational researches in South-South Nigeria?

Table 3. Mean responses on the tertiary institutions factors affecting educational researches in South-South Nigeria

	LECTURERS N=100			STUDENTS N=500		
	X	SD	DECISION	$\overline{X}$	SD	DECISION
17. No allocation of high scores/marks to research works.	3.75	1.68	AGREE	4.38	0.62	AGREE
18. Low communication level between school managements and students.	3.95	1.36	AGREE	3.85	1.17	AGREE
19. Limited demand for research scholars	4	0.92	AGREE	4.54	0.75	AGREE
20. Delay in approval of research topics	4.3	1.22	AGREE	4.08	0.96	AGREE
21. Poorly equipped libraries	4.1	1.07	AGREE	4.77	0.42	AGREE
22.Communication gap between school managements and companies	3.5	1.43	AGREE	3.92	0.92	AGREE

The table 3 above shows that both lecturers and students accepted the aforementioned 6 items as tertiary institutional factors posing problems to educational researches in South-South Nigeria. Osuala (2005) stated that

university libraries are poorly equipped. There is a limited demand for research scholars by tertiary institutions, which also affect research according to Osuala (2005). Shehu (1998) states that "the academic calendar is frequently disrupted: there are strikes, lockouts, closures, and general social upheavals - and all these can influence the orientation, timing, process, and the quality of any research activity in the field of education".

Research Question 4

What are the strategies for tackling the hindrances to educational researches in South-South Nigeria?

Table 4. Mean responses on the strategies for tackling the hindrances to educational researches in South-South Nigeria

		LECTURERS N=100			STUDENTS N=500		
		$\overline{X}$	SD	DECISION	$\overline{X}$	SD	DECISION
23.	Improvement and regular funding of South-South tertiary institutions by government.	4.75	0.45	AGREE	4.54	0.64	AGREE
24.	Awarding of high marks/scores to students by School management.	4.5	0.51	AGREE	4.92	0.26	AGREE
25.	Improvement in security within the various states.	4.65	0.49	AGREE	4.38	0.88	AGREE
26.	Creation of more public libraries by government.	4.7	0.47	AGREE	4.70	0.46	AGREE
27.	Construction & rehabilitation of roads to industries, sites, schools.	4.4	0.68	AGREE	4.38	0.74	AGREE
28.	Adequate supervision of tertiary institutions by relevant government agencies.	4.65	0.49	AGREE	4.77	0.42	AGREE

From table 4 above, it is seen that items 23-30 were agreed with by both lectures and students as ways to tackle the issues affecting educational researches in South-South Nigeria. Ayonmike, Okwelle & Okeke (2015) also recommend that government should adequately fund educational institutions and programs. Furthermore, Serumu (2015) also states that regular supervision is crucial to any education-based activity.

Conclusion and recommendations

The study revealed the governmental factors, tertiary institutional factors, and researcher's factors affecting educational researches in South-South Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. As a matter of urgency, there should be improvement on the amount of fund allocated to educational institutions in the region, which will enable individuals in the institutions carry out meaningful researches.

2. The various state governments should also improve the security situation in their respective regions. This will enable researchers carry out their works freely and without fear.

3. The managements of South-South tertiary institutions should encourage lecturers to carry out researches by making funds available to them through Tertiary Education Trust (TET) fund.

5. Secrecy and hoarding of information for research works by government ministries, departments, and agencies should be checkmated and enlightenments should be done.

6. Institutions of learning in the region should have strong partnership with international bodies such as U.S.A.I.D. and the U.N.E.S.C.O. for research funds assistance.

References:

Ahiakwo, M.J. (2006). *Statistics for Educational Research.* Port Harcourt: Harry Publications.

Akaninwor (2014). *Research Methods and Statistic (Paradigms in Education, Science and Technology).* Owerri: Civincs publishers.

Ayonmike, C. Okwelle, P. & Okeke, B. (2015). Towards Quality Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Programmes in Nigeria: Challenges and Improvement Strategies. *Journal of Education and Learning;* Vol. 4, No. 1.

Dokubo, I.N. (2010). Vocational Education Programmes and Empowerment of Rural Adult in Rivers East Senatorial District, Rivers State, Nigeria. An Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation. University of Calabar, Cross Rivers State.

Dokubo, C. & Dokubo, I.N. (2013). Identifiable problems inhibiting the effective management of vocational education programmes in Nigerian universities. *European Scientific Journal 9(22).*

Dokubo I.N. (2015).Conflicts in building industry in Rivers State, Nigeria: Causes and Solutions. *International Journal of Educational Policy and Entrepreneurial Research. 2,(10)* 20-30.

National Universities Commission (1999). Manual of Accreditation Procedures for Academic Programmes in Nigerian Universities. Abuja: National Universities Commission.

Nwogu, O.C. (2013). *A practical guide to research writing* (5th ed.). Choba: University of Port Harcourt press limited.

Nworgu B.G. (2006). *Educational research: basic issues and methodology.* 2nd Edition, Nsukka – Enugu: University Trust Publishers.

Ojimba, D.P. (2012). Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria: Issues, Problems and Prospects Dimensions. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*: 2(9), 23-30.

Okoh, N. (2002). Dissertation Skills (a guide to writing and research). Port Harcourt: Lamison Publishers.

Osuala (2005). *Introduction to Research Methodology.* Onitsha: Africana-Fep Publishing Co. Ltd

Serumu, I. (2015). Challenges of Implementing Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Curriculum in Delta State Colleges of Education. *Global Advanced Research Journal of Educational Research and Review*. Vol. 4(5) pp. 072-080.

Shehu, A. J. (1998). Educational research in Nigeria: some local forces inhibiting progress, and the way forward. Retrieved April 25, 2016 from http://www.unilorin.edu.ng/journals/education/ije/sept1998/educational%20r esearch%20in%20nigeria%20some%20local%20forces%20inhibiting%20pr ogress%20and%20the%20way%20forward.pdf