

Assessing the Quality of Education in Nassarawa State Communities: A Study of Piyancho Community

By

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Abstract

This study assessed the quality of education in Piyancho community, Nassarawa State, Nigeria. Using a mixed-methods approach where both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods were combined, a survey questionnaire was administered to 150 respondents, comprising teachers, students, and parents, and in-depth interviews were conducted with 20 key informants, including education stakeholders and community leaders. The study revealed that the quality of education in Piyancho community is weakened by inadequate infrastructure, insufficient teaching materials, and a shortage of qualified teachers. Additionally, the study found that cultural and socio-economic factors, such as poverty, culture and parental illiteracy, hinder access to quality education. The study recommends that the government, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders invest in improving the infrastructure and resources of schools in Nassarawa communities especially Piyancho, as well as implement initiatives to address the cultural and socio-economic barriers to education. The findings of this study contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the quality of education in rural communities in Nigeria, and provide insights for policymakers and educators seeking to improve educational outcomes in these areas.

Introduction

Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself (Dewey, 1916). In the development of individuals and communities, education is very fundamental. In fact, it is a fundamental right of every child to be educated because education is part of life itself. Hence the quality of education received by students has a lasting impact on their future prospects, employability, and overall well-being.

In Nigeria, the education sector has faced numerous challenges. Most of these challenges are socio-cultural, infrastructural, technological, economical and human resource-related challenges. These challenges are clearly seen in inadequate funding, insufficient infrastructure, and a shortage of qualified teachers. But, these challenges are particularly pronounced in rural communities, where access to quality education is often limited.

Nassarawa State, located in the North-Central region of Nigeria, is one of the states facing significant challenges in the education sector. Despite efforts by the state and local government to improve educational outcomes, many communities in Nassarawa State continue to struggle with inadequate educational resources, poor infrastructure, and a shortage of qualified teachers. Piyanchu community, a boarder community located in the boundary between Nassarawa State and Federal Capital Territory Abuja is one of such community that faces significant challenges in providing quality education to its residents.

This study aims to assess the quality of education in Piyanchu community, with a focus on identifying the challenges and barriers that hinder access to quality education. The study will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods. The findings of this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the quality of education in rural communities in Nigeria and provide insights for policymakers and educators seeking to improve education in Nigeria and other developing nations.

Quality Education

Quality education is a multifaceted concept. This includes various dimensions, such as teacher quality, curriculum relevance, instructional materials, and learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2014). According to the World Bank (2018), quality education is characterized by the presence of skilled teachers, adequate infrastructure, and

relevant curricula. In fact, the quality of education determines the overall performance of students and the effectiveness of educational systems.

On quality teacher, there is need for qualified, experienced, and trained teachers. This factor has been consistently linked to student outcomes (Hanushek, 2011; Rivkin et al., 2005). Besides, class Size and Composition is a very important factor. Smaller class sizes and diverse student compositions have been shown to improve student outcomes (Krueger, 2003; Lazear, 2001).

Moreover, curriculum relevance and coherence are important factor to quality education. A well-structured and relevant curriculum is essential for promoting student teaching (Schmidt et al., 2015). Alongside with curriculum are the instructional materials and resources. Adequate instructional materials and resources, such as textbooks and technology, are critical for supporting student learning (Wenglinsky, 2005).

Quality education has a record of numerous positive impacts on the students. Among these positive outcomes are higher student achievement and better learning outcomes (Hanushek, 2011). This can equally lead to economic growth. Quality education is essential for promoting economic growth and development (World Bank, 2018). With quality education, there are equal opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds (UNESCO, 2014).

literature Review

Dewey (1916) in his "Democracy and Education" argues that education should be experiential, student-centred, and focused on democratic values. He explored the relationship between experience and education, emphasizing the importance of reflective thinking and problem-solving. Hence, education for him is a participatory mental activity that provides solution to the probing questions of human realities. It is a powerful weapon in the hand of human beings that if properly employed and applied will lead to a meaningful society.

However, Freire (1968) in his “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” criticized traditional education systems and advocates for a pedagogy that empowers marginalized communities and promotes social justice. For him, every educational activity should be geared towards meaningful life and justice for the common man in the society. He examined the political dimensions of education, highlighting the need for critical consciousness and transformative action.

In effort to ensure this transformed society through education Piaget (1947) in his “The Psychology of Intelligence”: advocated for the theory of cognitive development, emphasizing the role of active learning and hands-on experience. He explored the relationship between learning and creativity, arguing that students should be encouraged to construct their own knowledge. It is this tendency to reconstruct our own knowledge that leads to a reconstructed society we are witnessing in the modern world.

Moreover, Bloom (1956) in his "Taxonomy of Educational Objectives", advanced this line of thinking when he developed a framework for categorizing learning objectives, emphasizing the importance of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. He explored the relationship between human characteristics (e.g., motivation, personality) and school learning, arguing that educators should take a more holistic approach to teaching. In his own view Vygotsky (1978) in his work "Mind in Society": presented social interaction, language, and culture as indispensable factors in shaping cognitive development He examined the relationship between thought and language, arguing that language plays a central role in mediating cognitive processes. This he referred as socio-cultural theory of learning, (Meta AI, Conversation on Quality Education, 2025).

Nevertheless, in his “Frames of Mind” Gardner (1983), introduced his theory of multiple intelligences, challenging traditional notions of intelligence and arguing that students possess diverse cognitive strengths. In his “The Disciplined Mind”, he explored the importance of disciplinary thinking and argues that education should

focus on developing students' cognitive abilities in specific subject areas. In his "Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education" Noddings (1984), argued that caring should be a central ethical principle in education, emphasizing the importance of empathy, compassion, and relationships. He explored the challenges of implementing caring practices in schools, highlighting the need for educators to prioritize relationships and emotional well-being. Hence, he is of the view that there should be a caring relationship between the educated and the educator.

Furthermore, Fullan (2001) in his "The New Meaning of Educational Change" examined the complexities of educational change, arguing that educators should focus on developing a deep understanding of the change process. He further explored the role of leadership in promoting educational change, emphasizing the importance of building capacity, fostering collaboration, and promoting a culture of continuous learning.

With these thoughts, scholars have made significant contributions to our understanding of quality education. Their various writings are very important in the impartation of quality education. But while their views continue to influence educational theory, policy, and practice in the field of education, there is little or no emphasis on the education in the under-developed rural communities. The purpose of this study is to delve into the local situations of local African community where education is a rare privilege of the rich and the powerful. This opportunity of quality education for all has been denied of the less-privileged ones in the local communities of developing nations. There are no equal opportunities of education for children from diverse backgrounds in Nigerian. Since northern Nigeria has been backward in quality education than the southern part of Nigeria, the study delves into a community in the central northern Nigeria called Piyancha where quality education seems to be a mirage.

Objectives

1. To assess the current state of education in Piyancho community.
2. To identify the challenges and barriers that hinder access to quality education in Piyancho community.
3. To explore the perceptions of teachers, students, and parents regarding the quality of education in Piyancho community.

Research Questions

1. What is the current state of education in Piyancho community?
2. What are the challenges and barriers that hinder access to quality education in Piyancho community?
3. What are the perceptions of teachers, students, and parents regarding the quality of education in Piyancho community?

Methodology

This study on quality education employed various methodological approaches in search of information. The study used a mixed-methods approach where both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods were combined. On quantitative, a survey questionnaire was administered to 150 respondents, comprising teachers, students, and parents to discern answers on the research question. On qualitative, an in-depth interview was conducted with 20 key informants, including education stakeholders and community leaders.

Presentation of Findings

Since this study used a mixed-methods approach where both quantitative and qualitative data collection was involved, the findings have both qualitative and

quantitative nature. The quantitative and qualitative findings are presented and conclude with thematic analysis.

Quantitative Findings

1. **Teachers Qualifications:** The study revealed that 85% of teachers in Piyancho community lack the required qualifications, with only 15% holding a bachelor's degree or higher. The few available schools, both private and government ones face shortage of qualified teachers particularly in such subject as mathematics, science and English.
2. **Classroom Resources:** The results showed that 90% of classrooms in Piyancho community lack essential resources such as textbooks, desks, chairs and other facilities. Many classrooms have broken windows and crumbling walls.
3. **Student-Teacher Ratio:** The study found that the average student-teacher ratio in Piyancho community is 45:1, exceeding the recommended ratio of 25:1. There is shortage of quality teachers that need to give quality attention to the students. Many teachers posted to the government school left the profession because of poor working condition
4. **Academic Performance:** The results indicated that students in Piyancho community perform poorly in external examinations, with only 10% scoring above average. Most of the students are backward in their intellectual capacity, understanding and retention because of lack of qualified teachers.

Qualitative Findings

1. **Perceptions of Education Quality:** Teachers, students, and parents in Piyancho community expressed concerns about the poor quality of education, citing factors such as inadequate resources, unqualified teachers, and poor infrastructure. A participant tagged the educational situation in Piyancho as “helpless condition” because of the numerous challenges involved.

2. **Teachers working condition:** Teachers in Piyancho community reported facing numerous challenges, including lack of training, inadequate resources, and poor working conditions. The working condition of teachers is not attraction to young graduate and that is why many youths are not interest in teaching profession. One of the participants referred to teachers as “poor mentors”.

3. **Impact of Poor Education:** Students and parents in Piyancho community reported that the poor quality of education has led to low academic achievement, limited career opportunities, and school dropout. Since the knowledge-impartation is very low, a good number of the children have resorted to going to farm and dropping out of school.

Thematic Analysis

From the quantitative and qualitative findings, the study discerned the following thematic analysis:

Theme 1: Inadequate Resources

The study revealed that inadequate resources, including textbooks, desks, and chairs, are a major challenge facing education in Piyancho community. Many schools in Nigeria depend on the government for funding and most of the time, the funds from government is unpredictable and unreliable. Even when these funds are made available, the management and accountability of the fund become a problem

Theme 2: Unqualified Teachers

The results showed that unqualified teachers are a significant problem in Piyancho community, with many teachers lacking the required qualifications. The ones with qualifications to teach are not interested in teaching profession, while the unqualified ones now find themselves doing the work of qualified teachers.

Theme 3: Poor Infrastructure

The study found that poor infrastructure, including dilapidated classrooms and lack of sanitation facilities, is a major challenge facing education in Piyancho community. The classroom structures are abandoned houses with broken doors and window. The environment affects the learning system in the school

These findings highlight the need for urgent attention to address the challenges facing education in Piyancho community, including inadequate resources, unqualified teachers, and poor infrastructure.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study "Assessing the quality of Education in Nassarawa state Communities: studies of Piyancho community" confirms the view of Freire (1968) in his "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" where he criticized traditional education systems and advocates for a pedagogy that empowers marginalized communities and promotes social justice. It is the kind of situation in a developing African society like Piyancho that made him to call for empowerment of marginalized communities through quality education. Quality education ensures fundamental justice for the common man in the rural society.

This work has provided valuable information into the despicable educational decay that is present in many societies of the underdeveloped nations. The finding indicates that the quality of education in Piyancho community is compromised by several factors, including inadequate resources, unqualified teachers, and poor infrastructure. On inadequate resources, the finding is consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of adequate resources in promoting quality education (UNESCO, 2014; World Bank, 2018). The lack of resources in Piyancho community is likely to hinder students' ability to learn effectively, leading to poor academic performance.

On unqualified Teachers that is up to 85% this finding is alarming, given the critical role that teachers play in promoting student learning. Unqualified teachers are unlikely to possess the necessary pedagogical skills and subject matter expertise to deliver high-quality instruction (Hanushek, 2011; Rivkin et al., 2005). On poor infrastructure, the study found that poor infrastructure, including dilapidated classrooms and lack of sanitation facilities, is a major challenge facing education in Piyancho community. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of adequate infrastructure in promoting quality education (Burgoyne, 2014; Lee, 2015). In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight the need for urgent attention to address the challenges facing education in Piyancho community.

Recommendations

From the findings of this research work, the following recommendation is made:

1. Government and Politicians

The government and other political stakeholders should prioritize the provision of adequate resources, including textbooks, desks, and chairs, to schools in Piyancho community. Secondly, there is a need for teacher training and development programmes to enhance the qualifications and pedagogical skills of teachers in Piyancho community. Finally, the government should invest in improving the infrastructure of schools in Piyancho community, including the construction of new classrooms and sanitation facilities.

2. Education stakeholders and policy-makers

Education stakeholders and policy makers should see the need for compulsory teacher training and development programmes. These programs are geared towards enhancement of the qualifications and pedagogical skills of teachers in Piyancho and other rural communities.

3. Non-governmental Organizations

Some non-governmental organization can help to invest in improving the infrastructure of schools in Piyancho community, including the construction of new classrooms and sanitation facilities. They can equally help to organize educational awareness program to rekindle in the mind of the rural community the need and importance of education

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. Firstly, the study's sample size was relatively small, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Secondly, the study relied on self-reported data from teachers, students, and parents, which may be subject to bias.

Future Research Directions

Future research should focus on exploring the impact of interventions aimed at improving the quality of education in Piyancho community. Additionally, studies should investigate the relationship between education quality and socio-economic outcomes in Piyancho community.

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