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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Poor academic performance according to Aremu (2003) is a performance that is adjudged by the examinee/testee and some other significant persons falling below an expected standard. Poor academic performance has been observed in school subjects especially Mathematics and English language among primary school pupils (Adesemowo, 2005). Aremu (2000) stresses that academic failure is not only frustrating to the pupils and the parents, its effects are equally grave on the society in terms of dearth of manpower in all spheres of the economy and politics.

Education at primary school level is supposed to be the bedrock and the foundation towards higher knowledge in tertiary institutions. It is an investment as well as an instrument that can be used to achieve a more rapid economic, social, political, technological, scientific and cultural development in the country. The National Policy on Education (2004) stipulated that primary education is an instrument for national development that fosters the growth and development of the individual for further education and development, general development of the society and equality of educational opportunities to all Nigerian children irrespective of any real or marginal disabilities.

The role of primary education is to lay the foundation for further education and if a good foundation is laid at this level, there are likely to be no problem at subsequent levels. However, different people at different times have passed the blame of poor performance in primary school to pupils because of their low retention, parental factors, association with wrong peers, low achievement, low retention, and the likes (Aremu & Soka, 2003; Aremu & Oluwole 2001; Aremu, 2000).

Morakinyo (2003) believe that the falling level of academic achievement is attributable to teacher's non-use of verbal reinforcement strategy. Others found out that the attitude of some

teachersto their job is reflected in their poor attendance to lessons, lateness to school, unsavory comments about pupil's performance that could damage their ego, poor method of teaching and the likes affect pupils' academic performance.

The question therefore is what is the cause of this fallen standard and poor academic performance of pupils? Is the fault entirely that of teachers or pupils or both of them? Is it that pupils of today are non achievers because they have low intelligent quotient and a good neutral mechanism to be able to act purposefully, think rationally and deal effectively with academic tasks? Or is it because teachers are no longer putting in much commitment as before? Or is it in teachers' method of teaching and interaction with pupils? Or is the poor performance of pupils caused by parents' perception of the causes of poor academic performance among primary school students in Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of problem

The differential scholastic achievement of students in Nigeria has been and still a source of concern and research interest to educators, government and parents. This is so because of the great importance that education has on the national development of the country. All over the country, there is a consensus of opinion about the fallen standard of education in Nigeria (Adebule, 2004). Parents and government are in total agreement that their huge investment on education is not yielding the desired dividend. Teachers also complain of student's low performance at both internal and external examination. This problem are attributed to poor foundation from primary school due to poor teaching standards as well as other factors such poor funding of education by government as well as negligence by parents. It is against this constraints that the researcher sees the subject matter as an empirical problem worthy of investigation.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The central objective of the study is to assess the factors responsible for the poor academic performance in public primary schools. The specific objectives are:

- i. Ascertain environmental factors as causes of poor academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja.
- ii. Examine teachers factors as causes of poor academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja.

- iii. Determine the attitudes of pupils as causes of poor academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja.
- iv. Find out attitudes of parent as causes of pupils poor academic performance in primary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja.

1.4 Research Questions

This research will attempt to answer the following questions:

- i. Is the poor performance of pupils in primary schools in Gwagwalada caused by environmental factors?
- ii. Is the poor performance of pupils in primary school Gwagwalada caused by teacher's factors?
- iii. Is the poor performance of pupils in primary school Gwagwalada caused by teacher's factors?
- iv. Is the poor performance of pupils in primary school Gwagwalada caused by the attitudes of parents?

1.5 Basic assumptions

From the poor academic performance of the pupils from public primary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja the researcher based her assumption as follow:

- i. The poor academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja is predicated on the pupils' study habits and attitudes to learning only.
- ii. That the non-availability of instructional and other facilities like classroom size furniture etc influences pupils academic performance in public primary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja. The pupil's environment and regular visit of inspector of education influence the academic performance in public primary schools in the area of study.

1.6 Significance of the study

The justification of the study lies in the fact that it will bring out and correct the factors that lead to poor academic performance in the public primary schools. It will also help the government the non-go-environment agencies and the society at large to know and appreciate their effort and give necessary support for the improvement of teaching and learning in out primary schools.

1.7 Scope of the study

This research work covers an empirical study performance of pupils in public primary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council Abuja. The study focused entirely on the academic aspects of the schools. Therefore, the finding in this research work is guided or dependent on information derived from the sample schools. The study covers a period from 2006-2011.

1.8 Definition of terms

Performance: The accomplishment of a given task measured against preset known standards of accuracy, completeness, cost, and speed.

Academic achievement: level of schooling you have successfully completed and the ability to attain success in your studies.

Poor academic performance: school achievement below the expected for a given age, cognitive skills, and schooling.

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