

The Relationship Between School Distance And Academic Achievement Of Primary School Pupils In Ovia North-East Lga, Edo State, Nigeria.

Ebinum, Udoka Stanley , Akamagune, Nelly Emmanuel, Ugbong, Benedict Igboh

University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria Department of Educational Management PH+234 806 959 5992
stanley.ebinum@gmail.com

University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria Department of Educational Management PH+234 806 687 6203
akamagune.emmanuel@gmail.com

Cross River State College of Education, Akamkpa Cross River State Department of Educational Foundation PH+234 806 854 2411
benugbon@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT: The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between school distance and academic achievement of primary school pupils in Ovia North-East LGA. As a guide to this study, four research questions as well as three hypotheses were tested the correlational research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised all primary schools in Ovia North-East LGA. There are one hundred and one primary schools out of which twenty schools (20%) were sampled using the random sampling technique and one hundred teachers were used as sample for the study. The research instrument was a structured questionnaire on relationship between school distance and academic achievement of primary school pupils (S.D.A.A.Q). The reliability of the instrument was established through the use of test re-test method. The collected data were analyzed using simple percentage and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistic was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The instrument was trial tested in Uselu primary school, Egor Local Government Area in Edo State using 20 teachers. The reliability coefficient was 0.86. The findings of the study revealed that: pupils in Ovia North-East LGA covered long distance to school; there is significant relationship between school distance and academic achievement of primary school pupils; there is a relationship between school distance and academic achievement of male primary school pupils While for the female, there is no significant relationship between school distance and academic achievement. It was thus recommended that primary schools should be located in different strategic locations in the Local Government Area to reduce the distance covered by the pupils. Alternatively, school buses should be made available to convey the pupils to and from schools to overcome the problem of late coming and tiredness on the part of the pupils thereby by enhancing their academic achievement. Parents and guardians should locate schools closer to their place of residence so as to prevent the pupils from walking long distance to schools which may reduce the level of their academic achievement. Furthermore, the Government should ensure that the available primary schools are made conducive for effective learning so as to improve the academic achievement of the pupils. Again, pupils should be motivated as well as reinforced on regular basis to encourage them to attend school regularly.

Keywords: Distance, Academic Achievement, Public schools, Achievement.

1. Introduction

Ideally, there must be some laid down guidelines and criteria that should inform the location of any school be it formal or informal. This is to make sure that schools are located in environments and atmospheres that are conducive for effective teaching and learning. Usually, the first thing that comes to the mind of parents and other adults about the choice of a school for their children and wards, especially at the primary level in Nigeria, is the closeness of the school to the home. This is perhaps a major reason why big companies and organizations as well as some universities in Nigeria usually locate their own primary and secondary schools right inside their housing complexes. Examples are the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) Schools in Warri, the Delta Steel Company Ovwian-Aladja Schools, and the University Demonstration Schools. The closeness of schools to the children's homes has become a useful consideration in the establishment of schools. Schools should however not be sited close to noisy environments such as markets, hospitals, highways, railway stations, refineries, industries, or close to hazardous environments like rivers, steep hilltops, high tension electric lines, or close to dreaded or bizarre environments like mortuaries, burial grounds, and ritual shrines. Most important in the consideration of school location are the population threshold and the distance the

children would have to travel to get to school every day. This has become the concern of the educational planner who uses population densities as a rough index of school location and expansion as well as in the improvement of services provided. Therefore, the distance travelled to school in educational planning should be a sine qua non in the approval and location of schools. However, it piques the investigator that in spite of this, a staggering majority of Nigerian pupils and students are observed to walk long distances to and from school every day, especially in the rural areas (Arubayi, 2005; Duze, 2005). Another source of worry is that distance travelled to school has some measure of relationship to ills like absenteeism, delinquency, truancy, lateness and indiscipline. These ills, either single or combined ultimately affect achievement at school. Also, when the distances travelled to school is too far for the child, besides fatigue, there is the tendency for the child to lose interest at school and begin to be truant, and may drop out of school completely (Arubayi, 2005; Duze, 2005). Statistics in Nigeria today, show that more than fifty percent of primary school pupils and thirty percent of secondary school students, drop out of school yearly, and this is worse in some eastern states (AIT News Hour, 2008). It has also been observed that cases abound where children travel up to five kilometers to school on foot. Even when they could afford to travel by car, motorcycle or bicycle for such long distances,

the stress of commuting to school weighed the children down, and the exigencies of the road left parents and guardians worried until their children returned home safely. Again, there are schools that are over-populated because of their location, and these are not without their peculiar problems associated with over-crowding in classrooms, inadequate provision of services and dearth of staff, and infrastructures. A distance of one kilometer to school on foot is considered by school head- teachers to be too long for children between the ages of six and seventeen. If students walk over one kilometer to school, the outcomes would not be in the best interest of both the child and the school because set goals and objectives may not be completely achieved. In implementing the compulsory free education programme, many states in Nigeria stipulated that schools should be located at most one kilometer from the residences of the communities to be served. This was one major reason why schools were opened in almost every hamlet in the country. But today, it does appear that many Nigerian children still travel long distances to and from school. Arubayi (2005) compared distance travelled to school by pupils/students in Edo and Delta States and the effect on attendance. He concluded that the location of a sizeable number of primary and secondary schools in both Edo and Delta States were far away from the residences of the pupils/students and this had some effect on school attendance. There is a paucity of empirical evidence on distance travelled to school by pupils and students and its consequent effect on school attendance in many States in Nigeria, including Anambra, Enugu and Ebonyi States. Also, research evidence showed that long distances travelled to school are among the major reasons for high dropout rates in primary and secondary schools in Nigeria, and the South Eastern States of Nigeria have been observed as recording large numbers of school dropouts. (Arubayi, 2005; Duze 2005; Madumere, 1991; Onakpoma, 2008). Empirical research in the Third World countries indicates that early school dropout is positively related to the distance between schools and students' homes (Vasquez, 1965, Haq, 1961). Distance from school is related to propensity to enroll and absenteeism. At the primary level, almost all students travel from home to school and back every day; therefore journey to school distance should always be considered in primary school location decisions. If the average distance to school can be shortened, at both primary and secondary school levels, students will have more time to dedicate to school studies, work at home or leisure activities. In addition, absenteeism and early school leaving may be decreased. It is based on this that this study aims at investigating the relationship between school distance and academic achievement of primary school pupils in Ovia North-East Area of Edo state.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The distance travelled to school every day by both primary school pupils and secondary school students has substantial adverse effects on attendance at school. Younger children at the crucial early stages of education are often the most vulnerable to dropping out of school due to the distance from school. Walking several kilometers every day is more strenuous for a small child than a teenager. Rural schools are frequently located further from children's homes than urban schools, and may suffer additional supply constraints such as poor facilities and low teacher quality. Female pupils

travelling long distances to school face additional parental concerns about safety. Children may be discouraged from attending school if they are punished or chastised for arriving late after a lengthy walk to school. These factors combine with others to create significant barriers preventing millions of the world's children from attending school. It takes a steely determination on the part of children and their families to overcome these barriers. Thus, it became an issue of concern for the researchers to investigate the relationship between school distance and academic achievement of primary school pupils in Ovia North-East Area of Edo state.

1.3 Research Questions

- i. What is the average distance covered to primary schools by pupils in Ovia North-East Local Government Area?
- ii. Is there any relationship between school distance and pupils' academic achievement?
- iii. Is there any relationship between school distance and pupils' school attendance?
- iv. Is there relationship between school distance and academic achievement of pupils' gender?

Research question 1 was answered while research questions 2-4 were hypothesized

1.4 Research Hypotheses

- H01:** There is no significant relationship between school distance and pupils' academic achievement.
- H02:** There is no significant relationship between school distance and pupils' school attendance.
- H03:** There is no significant relationship between school distance covered and academic achievement of pupils based on gender.

1.5 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to find out the average distance covered to primary schools by pupils in Ovia North-East Area of Edo State; investigate the relationship between school distance and pupils' academic achievement in Ovia North-East Area of Edo State; investigate the relationship between school distance and pupils school attendance and finally to investigate the relationship between school distance and academic achievement of pupil's gender.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study provides information to planners, policy makers, teachers, parents and community members about the importance of appropriate location of primary schools in Ovia North-East local Government Area of Edo State. Therefore, findings are appropriate in future planning and practice in building new primary schools on proper strategies to institute better learning environment. Furthermore, as long as school distance was likely to affect academic performance of the learners, the findings open new avenues for future studies in different primary schools in the state.

1.7 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The research is focused in determining the relationship between school distance and academic achievement of primary school pupils in Ovia North-East Area of Edo State. The indices to be covered include: school distance, academic achievement, school distance and pupil's academic achievement, and also the effect of the school distance on

school attendance. This study covers all public primary schools in Ovia North-East Area of Edo State.

2.0 Review of Related Literature

2.1 The Concept of School Distance

In the mid-1980s the mean distance travelled to school by 11–16 year olds in the UK was just over 2 miles; by 2013 this had almost doubled, increasing to 3.7 miles (Department for Transport, 2013). This lengthening of the high school commute has been influenced by some of the urban-structural processes which have occurred over the past 50 years. Firstly a marked increase in the size of high schools, which began in the post-war decades (Rigby, 1979) has resulted in secondary schools drawing their pupil intakes from wider catchment areas on average. Second, the suburbanization and decentralization which has occurred in many cities has dispersed some school-aged children to family housing in low density new-build housing estates on the outskirts (Hoare, 1975), which involves both longer travel distances and an urban form that favours car use (Dieleman et al., 2002 and Newman and Kenworthy, 2006). A third factor that has also influenced the length of children's journey to school is legislation promoting parental choice, which has encouraged the selection of out-of-area schools (see for example Parsons et al., 2000, Hoare, 1975). In recent studies it has been estimated that less than half of all school-age children now attend their nearest school (Allen, 2007 and Ferrari and Green, 2013). These changes in the spatial configuration of schools and urban space have been accompanied by significant social change such as the rise of the dual-working family and growing private car ownership, a corollary of increased household affluence. These have occurred over a period that has seen the cost of car travel decrease in real terms compared to other forms of transport (especially following deregulation and privatization of public transport which occurred in the 1980s (Fairhurst and Edwards, 1996). The rise in volume of road traffic associated with increased private car use has also led to rising concerns about road safety, which has in turn contributed to decreasing child independence and increased parental surveillance. Parental strategies to cope with this dual challenge often most conveniently involve driving children to school en route to work. All of these factors have combined to produce a highly complex pattern of travel from home to school characterized by, and enabled by, growth in the use of motorized forms of transport. According to 1975/6 National Transport Survey data for Great Britain, 55% of all pupils walked to school, and 7% travelled by car (Rigby, 1979). By 2012 only 38% of pupils aged 11–16 years walked to school and 26% travelled by car (Department for Transport, 2013). In 1975–6, walking was the selected mode of travel for 93.6% of all “education” trips under 1.6 km (approximately 1 mile), exemplifying the key underlying constraint on modal choice: distance. Notwithstanding the effect of distance, the choices that children (and their parents) make with regards to school commuting may depend crucially on the interaction of several factors operating at a number of levels. Neighbourhood-level factors, which include characteristics of the urban form and structure, may have a range of direct and indirect effects on travel behaviour. School-level factors, most notably variations in the ‘performance’ of schools and the socioeconomic composition of their pupil intake, may

influence school and residential location choices, thereby potentially circumscribing travel options and average travel distances to school. Individual-level characteristics, such as age, have a relationship to the extent to which children will countenance or be empowered to choose active forms of travel. The relationship between factors at these different levels is likely to be very complex: individual pupils are simultaneously ‘members’ of their neighbourhood and the school they attend, and models of travel behaviour may be underpinned by both fixed (e.g., age, gender) and random effects (e.g., distance to school).

2.2 Concept of Academic Achievement

Academic achievement has to do with what a learner is able to accomplish by execution of class work in the school. Stiggings (2001) sees academic achievement as something a learner do or achieve at school, college or university, in class, in a laboratory or field work. Wentling (2000) said that academic achievement refers to achievement of individuals’ objective to various types of knowledge and skills. According to the author the objective are established based on the age, prior learning and capacity of individuals with regards to education, socialization and qualification. Some of the purposes of academic achievement measurement are enumerated in Ukwuije (1989: 22) as follows: to determine the relative effectiveness of a programme in terms of students’ behavioural outputs; to identify students growth or lack of growth in acquiring desirable knowledge skills, attitudes and social values; to hold teachers determine the effectiveness of their teaching technique and learning material; to help motivate students to learn as they discover their progress or lack of progress in given task; to encourage students to develop a sense of discipline and systematic study habits; to acquaint parents or guardians with their children performance ; to predict the general trend in the development of teaching learning process; to make reliable decision about education planning and to provide educational administrators with adequate information about teachers effectiveness and school need.

2.3 Empirical Studies

2.3.1 Relationship Between School Distance and Pupils’ Academic Achievement

Poor academic performance has been associated with the location of primary schools in various studies. Numerous studies link learner’s poor academic performance in specific with the walking distance which the learners travel to reach their schools. For example; Engelbrecht et al. (1996) in a study which investigated the location of schools, revealed that distance traveled by learners from home to school correlated positively with the academic performance of the students. The researcher elaborates further that most of the learners were affected by the distance which made them use most of their time on traveling than learning. The investigation by Morakinyo (2003) on the effect of distance to school students found that the falling level of academic achievement was attributed to teacher’s non-use of verbal reinforcement strategy. Moyo (2013) investigated the effects of poverty on access to education involving students from Tshazi Secondary School in the Insiza district in Kenya through questionnaires, interviews and content analysis. In that study, Moyo associated walking over long distances to and from school might lead to late coming at school and at

home after school in evening. It was also explained that because of longer walking distance, fatigue and hunger lead students to drowsiness during learning as a result of walking over long distances compared to students from rich families who usually cycled to school making them at the advantage of arriving at school early without having lost any considerable amount of energy. Walking distance as it has been identified by several researchers appears to be a common factor for poor academic performance. Adeboyeje, Olaniyi and Adepoju (2003) identify home-school distance through involvement of stakeholders as one among several factors that causes poor performance of students in public examinations. Other factors were identified to include poor location of the school, incessant changes in government policies, closure of schools, which is contingent upon teachers' strike action, high student teacher ratio, poor supervision, monitoring and evaluation machinery, lack of good textbooks, poor content and context of instruction, poor and non-conductive environment among others. In their explanation, Onderi, Kiplangat, and Awino (2014) citing Oriko (2002) and Reche et., al. (2012) indicate that walking long distances to school greatly make students reach it with empty stomachs and lateness influencing negatively, their academic performance. Other studies have found that the performance of students can be affected by little time to concentrate in studies due to distance as explained with and non-use of verbal reinforcement strategy by teachers. In addition, studies show that the attitude of some teachers to students lead to poor attendance in lessons, lateness to school, unsavory comments about student's performance that could damage their ego, and poor method of teaching. Onyeachu (1996) examined the influence of school environment on the student academic performance in secondary schools in Lagos State. The study revealed a strong relationship on performance of learners in relation with school environment. Factors such as school facilities, class size, school location, and school plant planning were also examined to determine their effects on the academic achievement of secondary school students. In that study it was found out that most of secondary schools have inadequate facilities to support teaching and learning process thus leading to mass failures. Moreover, Adell (2002) argued that poor performance in schools is an international problem that has been linked to the low social-economic background of the learners and school location which affect academic performance. Besides, the study by Brecht, Kruger and Booyesen (1996) assessing the provision of education revealed that performance of learners does not exist in a vacuum as it is closely linked to the broad social, economic and political structures of the particular country and its services. They explained that education and politics exist in a symbiotic relationship in view of the fact that education is always addressed within an environment of politics. This implies that these differences in academic performance are linked to social factors such as poverty, political, socio-economic problems. Provision of education in a developing country like Nigeria is vital for the development of the Nation. In that regard, efforts are required to improve our education standards, particularly on the involvement community members in matters related to education as key beneficiaries and sources of curricula contents. Other than distance, academic performance of the learners is affected with numerous factors like students attendance and the social status of their parents who fail to provide their sons and

daughters with the basic school needs like exercise books, paying school fees timely, and other needed school contributions. Geographical location of the school affect attitude of learners towards academic performance (Onomuodeke, 1995). The other study by Komba, Hizza and Jonathan (2013) was conducted to link education providers, facilitators, and learning environments (facilities and infrastructure, availability of materials and performance) of ward secondary schools in Moshi district by involving four ward secondary schools. Through a total of 100 students, four head of schools, eight teachers, and four ward education officers, two Municipal/District education officers using surveying interview method, elite interviews and document review found that there was no impressive performance among ward secondary schools in Moshi Municipal. Among the challenges that limited their performance included the lack of friendly teaching and learning environment. Joseph (2004) conducted a doctoral study on the effects of location using questionnaire to collect the data to 40 schools considered to be poorly performing and forty schools that were performing well in the matric examinations based in disadvantaged community. The data obtained suggested that many schools (66.5% of schools surveyed) lacked effective management structures that are essential for the implementation of quality teaching and learning. The other cause of poor performance in school was lack of support and active participation of the parents in the education of the learners. Several other causes were identified to include poor management of school resources for effective teaching and learning, lack of physical facilities remained an issue to the poorly performing schools as 54.5% of the surveyed schools, such school lacked shared vision and cooperation among the stakeholders of education for the provision of quality education, and non-discipline and non-committed learner bodies. Similarly, Galabawa (2002) in a study which he conducted to and using and revealed that, when schools are located far distance from home, academic performance of learners is affected, as most of them remain with little time to concentrate on their (private or in school) studies due to the long distances they travel to reach their schools. A recent study conducted by Germany-based Education International showed that long journeys to school have a negative impact on students' health and on their education achievement levels. "A recent study conducted by Germany-based Education International showed that long journeys to school have a negative impact on students' health and on their education achievement levels. "Up until now, neither education authorities nor national governments have considered the impact of long travel hours, to and from schools, on students' health and learning abilities. Sitting in a car or a bus for up to three hours per day is not rare, and tires a child's body more than an adult's," the study said. Echoing similar sentiments, Charles Mutazihana, the head teacher of Kigali Parents School, says that long distances cause fatigue as the day commences which kills a learner's concentration. The lengthy footing of kids to school disorganizes their concentration in class. Some of them arrive at school sweaty, stressed and exhausted both physically and psychologically, which compromises their performance," he says. Mutazihana adds that the fact that students are exposed to many things on their way to school affects their studies. Minor things can distract children on their way to school. For instance, some will move along with their balls playing, while others can even fail to get to school

in time due to unfriendly weather such as heavy rainfall,” he says. Seth Ndahoyo, a teacher at Nyabitse Primary School in Musanze District, explains that students who travel long distances are more likely to get to school late and miss an entire lesson or the introductory part of it which affects their overall learning in the long run. “For the case of day scholars, absenteeism can become a syndrome due to the long distance. Thoughts about how distant it is to get to school keep running in children’s mind whenever they wake up. This, coupled with the pile of homework assignments demoralises them,” Ndahoyo adds. For Sheila Kawira of Mother Mary Complex Kigali, other consequential factors also challenge young people physically and psychologically as they move to school. The schoolbag must be carried longer, long distances also mean getting up earlier, doing homework later – as well as reducing the free time which is crucial for a balanced life. Students can suffer from exhaustion and headaches. Children are more prone to stress and exhaustion – that’s why risk factors such as long distances to school must be minimized,” she says.

2.3.2 Relationship between School Distance and Pupils’ School Attendance

Broadly speaking, in Nigeria school attendance levels are lower for girls than for boys, (NPC and RTI International 2011). According to the 2010 NEDS the main reason that parents and guardians gave for their primary-aged children having never attended school was the distance to school. Several studies have carried out statistical analyses of school attendance based on household survey data. Kazeem et al. (2010) estimated a model of school attendance based on household characteristics taken from 2004 NDHS data, controlling for various demographic aspects such as wealth and location. They found that household wealth, religion, mothers’ and fathers’ education, and distance to the nearest school were the most important determinants of child school attendance. Gender was also a factor. Other determinants that had a negative association with school attendance for both girls and boys included travelling far to school, and living in the North East or North West. Importantly, controlling for school costs, girls were more likely to attend if they had school-age siblings but less likely if there were infants in the family to care for (ibid.) School supply has an impact on both pupil access, because distance to school is a major factor in children’s non-enrolment, and on school quality, since insufficient schools to satisfy demand for schooling can lead to overcrowded classrooms (NPC and RTI International 2011). Rather than looking at school provision directly, the 2010 NEDS considered school provision in terms of school proximity. This is particularly important as distance to school was the most widely cited reason in the survey for children never having attended school, mentioned by almost a third of respondents and by a higher proportion of poorer and more rural households. It is also confirmed as a major determinant of school attendance in statistical analyses of household survey data (e.g. Lincove 2009; Kazeem et al. 2010). School proximity may also be related to concerns about safety on the way to and from school, which was specifically mentioned by about 16% of respondents nationally, with higher figures for the North East and South West. Other qualitative studies also report pupil concerns about the distance from school being a potential deterrent from educational participation, especially for girls (Okojie 2008; Chege et al. 2008; Bakari 2013; Coinco 2012; Dunne

et al. 2013). According to the 2010 NEDS, around 68% of families nationally are said to be within a kilometer of the nearest primary school, a figure that drops to 62% if only government schools are counted, and to 54% and 56% for the North East and North West respectively (NPC and RTI International 2011). However, for around 7% of households nationally – and almost double that percentage of households in the North East – it takes over an hour to travel over 6 km to reach the nearest primary school. Seventeen percent of children nationally travel over 3 km. Inevitably, these figures are much higher for rural areas. In addition to possible safety concerns, the long distance will have an adverse effect on the many pupils who, as statistics testify, are hungry, malnourished and of poor health (see NPC and RTI International 2011).

2.3.3 Relationship between School Distance and Academic Achievement of Pupils’ Based on Gender

In primary schools and secondary schools where girls are day students, travelling long distances before arriving in school decreases their performance in school since they arrive in school already tired. Participation and performance in any subject according to SMT is then hampered. In Tanzania and Ghana, boys’ boarding schools have opened up admission for girls from the community as day students. Travelling long distances is still an issue, however, and girls arrive at school late, missing the first lesson of the day or get back home too tired for any meaningful studies. When they live long distances from school, girls are not able to participate in private tuition classes held after school hours or discuss homework, assignments as they are expected to leave school compound by a certain time or they need to hurry back home before darkness falls. In some cases where girls live a long distances from school, they are forced to take up lodgings in town where the school is located which gets them exposed to many unscrupulous and harassing situations. Some families allow their daughters to lodge with relatives who may not necessarily be the right people to select as guardians. When schools are some distances from home, parents tend to worry about the safety of their children especially the girl child and often unwilling to let them go to school. All these hardships frustrate the girl child more their male counterparts and thus makes them (the girls) perform poorly academically. Long distances from school promote lateness and truancy among students. In some schools, especially primary schools, lateness guarantees punishment which is usually by canning. Girls would rather skip school for the entire day than risk this form of punishment which is painful and embarrassing. Lateness also results in missing the early morning lessons which many primary schools is mathematics. Mathematics is a hierarchical subject and when lessons are missed, it is difficult to join in at a later stage. Unfortunately, most schools are unwilling to change the time table to remedy the situation. The girl child unlike the boys does face sexual harassment as a result of the long distance they walk to school. They can easily be deceived by young boys and sometimes men and they end up being sexually abused. Very often complaint of sexual harassment of girls is ignored and many girls do not report incidents which occur. Some girls withdraw and become reclusive when they are disturbed by sexual harassment. Once girls start withdrawing from people, their performance in school goes down. When the person sexually harassing the girl is along the way to school, she begins to skip school and ultimately drop - out of

school. Boys are also affected by long distance to school but not like their female counterparts. Distance can affect academic achievement of boys in various ways. Some may carry football in their bags and play it on their way to school since the distance is usually far and they end up being late to class or not even getting to school at all. Some boys as a result of the distance they travel to school developed hatred for going to school, some may go out and end up hiding in the neighborhood while the parents thinks that he is in school. All these on the long run affect the child performance in school especially the girl child.

3 Methodology

The correlational research design was employed in this study. This design deemed appropriate because it allows the measuring of two or more variables and the relationship that exists between them. The population for this study included all public primary schools in Ovia North-East L. G. A. which is 101 in number. The sample size for the study comprised of twenty (20) primary schools which is 20% of the total population of (101) primary schools in the study area. The random sampling technique was used to draw the twenty (20) schools from the Local Government Area. In each of the sampled schools, five teachers were selected given a total of One Hundred (100) respondents. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled; School Distance and Academic Achievement Questionnaire (S.D.A.A.D.). It comprises section A and B. Section A contained the demographic data of the respondents while section B contained item on the subsets of the relationship between school distance and pupils' academic achievement. The questionnaire was structured in form of four Point Likert-scales. In analyzing the data collected, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. Mean and standard deviation was used in answering the research Questions while Pearson products moment correlation was used to test the Hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance (α).

4. Data Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

Research Question One: What is the average distance covered to primary schools by pupils in Ovia North-East Local Government Area?

Table 1: Average Distance Covered to School by Pupils

Distance in Kilometers (KM)	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 2 KM (close distance)	19	19
2 – 5 KM (far distance)	81	81
Total	100	100

The findings showed on Table 1 above showed that 19 teachers which is 19% of the respondents agreed that pupils covered a close distance from house to schools while on the other hand, 81 representing 81% of the respondents agreed to the fact that pupils covered a far distance from their houses to the school on a daily basis. Therefore, from the data made available to the researcher it is evidently clear that most pupils in Ovia North-East Local Government Area cover an average distance between 2 – 5 kilometers which according to this study is considered far.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between school distance and pupils' academic achievement in Ovia North-East Local Government Area.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis of Distance and Pupils' Academic Achievement

Distance	R	P-value	Alpha Level
Distance and pupils' academic achievement	0.04	0.728	0.05

From the Table 2 above, the finding showed that there is no significant relationship between school distance and pupils' academic achievement in Ovia North-East Local Government Area. However, it is a very low positive relationship. Furthermore, as showed from the study; it is evidently clear that school distance is not significant in explaining the pupils' academic achievement based on the fact that the p-value at 0.05 level of significance is 0.728. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between school distance and pupils' academic achievement is upheld.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between school distance and pupils' school attendance based on gender.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis of School Distance and Pupils' School Attendance Based On Gender

Gender	R	P-value	Alpha Level
Male	0.03	0.761	0.05
Female	-0.11	0.288	0.05

The findings as summarized in Table 3 showed that; there is no significant relationship between school distance and the male pupils' schools' attendance, while for that of the female pupils the finding showed no significant relationship between the school distance female pupils school attendance. However as shown from the study, it is evident that distance is not significant in explaining pupils attendance based on gender. Since the p-value for both gender 0.761 and 0.288 respectively is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between school distance and pupils' school attendance is upheld. This is because there is not enough evidence at 0.05 level of significance that there is a relationship between the school distance and pupils' school attendance in Ovia North-East Local Government Area.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between school distance and pupils' academic achievement based on gender in Ovia North-East Local Government Area.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis of School Distance and Pupils' Academic Achievement

Gender	R	P-value	Alpha Level
Male	0.79	0.432	0.05
Female	0.27	0.008	0.05

The findings on Table 4 above showed that there is a positive relationship between school distance and male and female pupils' academic achievement. However, the relationship for male is on the high side (0.79) and that of the female is a

weak relationship (0.27). Furthermore, as depicted on the table, while the male correlation is not significant in explaining the male academic achievement, that of the female is significant at 0.008 p-value. Based on this, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between school distance and pupils' academic achievement based on gender in Ovia North-East Local Government Area is accepted because there is no enough evidence at 0.05 level of significance to conclude that there is a relationship between school distance and male pupils' academic achievement. On the other hand, since the p-value is smaller than the significance level at 0.05 for the female pupils, we reject the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative. This is because there is sufficient evidence at 0.05 alpha level to conclude that there is relationship between school distance and female pupils' academic achievement.

4.1 Discussion of Findings

Based on this study it was found that the average distance covered by primary school pupils to school in Ovia North-East Local Government Area was relatively far, (2 – 5 km). This result could be explained from the fact that the spatial distribution of primary schools in Ovia North-East Local Government Area is sparse in nature. This finding is in line with Arubayi, and Duze, (2005) that a staggering majority of Nigerian pupils and students are observed to work long distances to and from school every day, especially in the rural areas. Furthermore, this study supports the findings of Allen, (2007) and Ferrari, (2013) who opined that in recent studies it has been estimated that less than half of all school-age children now attend their nearest school. These changes in spatial configuration of schools have been accompanied by significant social change such as the rise of dual-working family and growing private car ownership, a corollary of increased household affluence.

4.1.1 Relationship between School Distance and Pupils' Academic Achievement

The findings of this study revealed that there is a positive relationship between school distance and pupils' academic achievement in Ovia North-East Local Government Area. However, it is a very low positive relationship. Furthermore, the findings clearly showed that school distance is not significant in explaining the pupils' academic achievement. This is in line with Engelbrecht et al. (1996) in a study which investigated the location of the schools, revealed that distance traveled by learners to school correlated positively with the academic performance of the students. Adeboyeje, Olaniyi and Adepoju (2003) also identified home-school distance through involvement of stakeholders as one among several factors that causes poor performance of students in public examination. Furthermore, this finding corresponded with Onderi, Kiplangat, and Awino (2014) citing Oriko (2002) and Reche et al. (2012) that walking long distances to school greatly make students reach school with empty stomachs and lateness influencing negatively, their academic performance. In a related study, Adell (2002) argued that poor performance in schools is an international problem that has been linked to low socio-economic background of the learner and school location which affect academic performance. This finding is further in line with Galabawa (2002) in his study which revealed that, when schools are located far distance from home, academic performance of learners are affected, as most of them remain with little time

to concentrate on their studies due to the long distance they travel to reach their schools.

4.1.2 Relationship between School Distance and Pupils' School Attendance Based on Gender.

The findings as summarized in table three showed that there is a very weak positive relationship between school distance and the male pupils' school attendance, while for that of the female pupils the finding showed a weak negative relationship between the school distance and female pupil's school attendance. However as shown from the study, it is evident that distance is not significant in explaining pupils attendance based on gender. This finding is in line with NPC and RTI (2011) that in Nigeria attendance level is low for girls. Furthermore, this finding is in line with Kazeem et al. (2010) in their estimated model of school attendance based on household characteristics taken from 2004 NDHS and found among other variables that distance to the nearest school were the most important determinant of child school attendance. Little wonder that NEDS (2010) considered school provision in terms of school proximity. This is particularly important as according to them distance to school was the most widely cited reason in the survey for children never having attended school mentioned by almost a third of respondents and by a higher proportion poorer and more rural households. Again, the finding is in consonance with other qualitative studies which reported that pupils' concern about the distance from school being a potential deterrent from educational participation, especially for girls (Okojie, 2008; Chege et al. 2008; Coinco 2012; Bakari 2013; Dunne et al 2013). It is further in line with NPC and RTI International (2011) that nationally, 17% of children travel over 3 kilometers. In addition to possible safety concerns, the long distance will have an adverse effect on the many pupils who as statistics testify, are hungry, malnourished and are of poor health.

4.1.3 Relationship between School Distance and Pupils' Academic Achievement

The finding showed that there is a positive relationship between school distance and male and female pupils' academic achievement. However, the relationship for male is on the high side (0.79) and that of the female is a weak relationship (0.27). Furthermore, it was depicted that while the male correlation was not significant in explaining the male academic achievements, that of the female was significant. This implies that there is relationship between school distance and female pupils' academic achievements. This is not unconnected to the fact that in primary schools where girls are day pupils, travelling long distances before arriving at school decreases their performance in school since they arrive in school very tired. For instance, based on this, boarding schools in Tanzania and Ghana have opened up admission for girls from community as day students. Travelling long distances is still a serious issue for the pupils; however, the girls arrive at school late, missing the first lesson of the day or get back home too tired for any meaningful studies. Again, when the pupils live long distances away from the school, girls are not able to participate in private tuition classes held after school hours or discuss homework, assignment as they are expected to leave the school compound by a certain time or they need to hurry back home before darkness falls. In addition, long distance from school promotes lateness and truancy among

pupils. In some primary schools where lateness guarantees punishment which is usually by canning, girls would rather skip school for the entire day than risk this form of punishment which is painful and embarrassing. It also results in missing the early morning lessons which in many primary schools is Mathematics. All these hardships frustrate the girl child more than their male counterparts and thus make the girls perform poor academically.

5 Conclusion

Based on the findings in this work, the following conclusions were drawn.

- ❖ The primary school pupils in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo state cover a long distance on daily basis to school.
- ❖ There is no significant relationship between school distance and pupils' academic achievement in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo state.
- ❖ There is no significant relationship between school distance and pupils school attendance based on gender.
- ❖ There is no significant relationship between school distance and male pupils' academic achievement in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo state. However, for the female pupils, there is significant relationship between school distance and academic achievement in Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Edo state.

6.0 Recommendations

In view of the fact that most pupils cover a long distance to schools in Ovia North-East Local, Government should as a matter of urgency build more primary schools in different strategic locations in the Local Government Area to reduce the distance covered by the pupils. Alternatively, school buses should be made available to convey the pupils to and from schools to overcome the problem of late coming and tiredness on the part of the pupils thereby by enhancing their academic achievement. Parents and guardians should locate closer to schools so as to prevent the pupils from walking long distance to schools which may reduce the level of their academic achievement. Furthermore, the Government should ensure that the available primary schools should be made conducive for effective learning so as to improve the academic achievement of the pupils. Again, pupils should be motivated as well as reinforced on regular basis to encourage them to attend school regularly.

7. Contribution to Knowledge

It is the earnest believe of the researchers that this study will increase the awareness on the relationship between school distance and academic achievement of primary school pupils. Furthermore, this study will enlighten the teachers, parents, students, the general public as well as the government on the roles they need to play to ameliorate the prevalent impact of primary schools distance on pupils' academic achievement.

Reference

- [1] Adeboyeje, R. A., Olaniyi, G.B & Adepoju, T.L. (2003) Correlate of some predictor variables on students learning retention and academic achievement at the senior school certificate examinations is selected

Nigerian States. A paper presented at the WAEC Monthly Seminar, Lagos.

- [2] Adell, M. A. (2002). Strategies for improving performance in adolescents. Madrid: Piramide.
- [3] Africa Independent Television (AIT) (2008). In AIT News Hour.
- [4] Allen R. (2007), Allocating pupils to their nearest secondary school: the consequences for social and ability stratification *Urban Stud.* (Routledge), Volume 44, 2007, pp. 751–770 View Record in Scopus.
- [5] Arubayi, E.A. (2005) "Comparing average distance travelled to schools by students in primary and secondary schools in Delta and Edo States and its effect on attendance." *Delsu Journal of Educational Research and Development.* 4 (1): 1-9.
- [6] Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M. (1965), *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behaviour.* Newyork: Plenum.
- [7] Department for Transport, (2013), *National Travel Survey: England 2010.* Statistical Release-National Travel Survey.
- [8] Dieleman, F. M. M. Dijst, G. (2002), Urban form and travel behaviour: Micro-level household attributes and residential context. *Journal of Urban Studies.*, Volume 39, pp. 507–527 View Record in Scopus.
- [9] Duze, C.O. (2005) "Attrition rates in primary schools in Anambra State." Unpublished Monograph.
- [10] Englebretch, S.M., Kriegler, and Booyens M.I. (1996), *Perspective on learning difficulties.* Pretoria, Van Schaik publishers.
- [11] Fairhurst, M. and Edwards, D. (1996), *Bus Travel Trends in the U.K.*
- [12] Ferrari, E.T. Green, M.(2013), Travel to school and housing markets: A case study of Sheffield, England *Environ. Plan. A,* Volume 45 pp. 2771–2788 View Record in Scopus. Citing articles (3)
- [13] Galabawa, (2002). *Evaluation and Program Planning,* v25 n1 p23-33 Feb 2002.
- [14] Hoare, R.A. (1975), *Location Efficiency of Secondary Schools* Institute of British Geographers, Transport Group
- [15] <http://www.unesco.org/education/poverty/news.shtml>.
- [16] Komba, C.K., Hizza, E.L. and Jonathan, W.T.Y. (2013) . Factors influencing academic performance of ward secondary schools.
- [17] Madumere, M.V. (1991) *Improving Primary Education in Developing Countries.* New York: Oxford University Press.

- [18] Morakinyo, E.O. (2003), Implication of legal liability for secondary school physical and health education. Vol. 7, (2).
- [19] Onakpoma, V.O. (2008) "Attrition rates in primary schools in Delta State" Unpublished M. Ed. Dissertation, Delta State University, Abraka.
- [20] Onderi, H., Kiplangat, R.K. and Awino, J. (2014), Kenyan journal of educational planning, economic and management. Vol.7, (2).
- [21] Onouwodeke M.A. (1995).The Management of Students' Learning Problems. Delta Journal of Educational Development, Abraka, 3(2):
- [22] Parsons, E. Chalkley, B. Jones, A. (2000), School catchments and pupil movements: a case study in parental choice Educ. Stud., Volume 26, 2000, pp. 33-48 View Record in Scopus. Citing articles (41)
- [23] Reche GN, Bundi TK, Riungu JN, Nthia J, Mbugua ZK (2012). Factors contributing to poor performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in public day primary schools in Mwimbi Division, Mara District Kenya. Int. Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 2(5), 127-133.
- [24] Rigby, J. P. (1979). Review of research on school travel patterns and problems. TRRL Supplementary Report 1979, Transport and Road Research Laboratory, Great Britain.
- [25] Ryan, R.M. and Deci, E.L. (2002), Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development and wellbeing. American Psychological Institute.
- [26] Stiggings, R.J (2001), Students involved classroom assessment (3rd ed) upper saddle River N J Practice Half.
- [27] Ukwuije, R.P.I (1989), Educational Measurement and Evaluation for Teachers. Ibadan Key Publishers Ltd.
- [28] UNICEF, (2003). Girls' education progress analysis and achievement in 2002. Medium – Term Strategic Plan 2002 – 2005, New York. 6, 11-15.
- [29] United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (2001). Education and poverty eradication. International Workshop On Education and Poverty Eradication, Kampala
- [30] United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization institute of statistics, (2005). Children out of school: measuring exclusion from primary education. Montreal: UNESCO Institute of Statistics.
- [31] United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization institute of statistics, (2011) Global education digest 2011. Comparing education statistics across the world: focus on secondary education. Montreal: UIS.
- [32] United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization, (2011), Institute for Statistics Fact Sheet, June 2011, No. 12.
- [33] United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2005). EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005: Education for All, the Quality Imperative. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.
- [34] United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2006). EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007: Strong Foundations. Early Childhood Care and Education. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.
- [35] United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2010). EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010: Reaching the Marginalized. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.
- [36] United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2012). Stumbling blocks to universal primary education: Repetition rates decline but dropout rates remain high. Global Education Digest 2012, 22.11.2012 issue UNESCO press.
- [37] United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), (1997) A Regional Profile: children growing into the 21st century. Annual Report 1997. UNICEF Eastern and Southern African Regional Office.
- [38] Weiner, J. (2002), Toward a theory of motivated information management. International Communication Association.
- [39] Wentling, T.L (2000), Mastery versus non-mastery instruction with varying test items feed backs treatment. Journal of educational psychology, 65, 50-58.