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| Research Article

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Impact of Long Distance Trekking on Students in Public Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract: This paper examined the impact of long distance trekking on students' academic performance in FCT Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) schools. The paper revealed that factors responsible for long distance trekking by public Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) students includes; high cost of transportation fares, lack of schools buses and economic hardship. The paper also identified reduction in the studies times and habits, health challenge and poor school attendance, physical exhaustion and fatigue and poor academic performance as impact of long distance trekking on students of public Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) schools in FCT. Based on this findings, the paper recommends the following. Governments should provide adequate school buses to all public Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) schools in FCT to support student movement to school. Principals of public Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) schools in FCT can collaborate and partner private institutions and international organizations to seek support for school buses for students and teachers. Parents and communities should support public Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) schools in FCT by providing schools buses to aid students and teachers movement to schools in the territory.

Key words: Long distance trekking, Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD).

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Introduction

The Nigerian secondary school also known as Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) is the education children receive after a successful completion of nine years of Basic Education and passing the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and Junior Arabic and Islamic Studies Certificate Examination (JAISCE). It includes: (i) senior secondary education, (ii) higher school; and (iii) continuing education given in Vocational Enterprise Institutions (VEIs) to either Basic Education graduates who are not proceeding to Senior Secondary Schools, or Senior Secondary graduates that are not proceeding to the tertiary level, as a means of preparing them for the world of work, wealth creation and entrepreneurship (National policy on education 2014).

The objectives of Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) according to (National policy on education 2014) are to: a. provide holders of the Basic Education Certificate and Junior Arabic and Islamic Studies Certificate with opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of gender, social status, religious or ethnic background; b. offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, disposition, opportunities and future roles; c. provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades; d. provide entrepreneurial, technical and vocational job-specific skills for self-reliance, and for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development; e. develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world's cultural heritage; f. inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence; g. foster patriotism, national unity and security education with emphasis on the common ties in spite of our diversity; and h. raise morally upright and well-adjusted individuals who can think in dependently and rationally, respect the views and feelings of others and appreciate the dignity of labour. (National policy on education 2014).

Federal capital Territory, Abuja is home to many private and public Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) but the public Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) is the highest in number due to the large population in the territory. The Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) were established in FCT and its environment to provide post-basic education to the residents of FCT and the international communities.

Students in Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) in Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Nigeria trek to their schools due to increase in transportation fares as a result of economic hardship and inflation in Nigeria. Many parents have expressed frustration over increasing school-related expenses despite stagnant salaries. Many students in the Nigeria capital trek to school because of the increase in transport fare which is beyond many students to meet daily. Many students trek a long distance from their homes to school due to unaffordable transport costs. It is important to discuss the impact of trekking long distance on students of public Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) in Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria.

Concept of Long Distance Trekking

Long distance trekking is the physical walking from place to place by an individual or loans. Long distance trekking is the physical movement of people and loads from one place to another using long period of time on the process. Okpunukpang, Ogunode, and Ugwa (2024) defined long distance trekking as the long movement from one point to another place. Long distance trekking involve movement of people and loads from one place to another place that takes a long period of time.

In Nigeria today, many students now trek a long distance to their schools for education. There are many factors responsible for the long movement students embark every day to schools.

Factors Responsible for Long Distance Trekking among Students in Public Secondary Schools in FCT

There are many factors responsible for public secondary schools students' long distance trekking in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Some of the factors includes; high cost of transportation fares, lack of schools buses and economic hardship.

High cost of transportation fares

The high cost of transportation as a result of fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria is responsible for why many public secondary schools students trek to schools in FCT. Okonkwo (2023) asserted that students are another group that is affected by the removal of the fuel subsidy, as they must pay more for transportation to and from school. Many students depend on public transport or private vehicles to get to school, which have become more expensive due to the higher cost of fuel. Some students may have to drop out of school or defer their studies if they cannot afford the transportation costs. Some students may also have to cope with poor learning conditions, such as inadequate facilities, overcrowded classrooms and frequent power outages, as schools struggle to provide quality education with limited resources. Abubakar (2017) and Ogunode, Eze, and Olumodeji, 2024b and Ogunode, Cletus, and Tswenji, (2024a) observed that movement is done mostly by buses, motorcycles or cars that use fuel. The subsidy removal has led to an increase in the fuel price which have also led to increase in transportation fare. Subsidy removal in Nigeria have affected learning programme of students in Nigerian educational institutions. The removal of subsidies has led to a hike in the price of fuel, which automatically leads to inflation in the country, it is evident that this hike in the price of fuel making it difficult for student's movement to schools. The implication of this high transportation fares for students is trekking.

Lack of schools buses

The lack of school buses in FCT also contributed to the reasons why many students residing in FCT trek to schools from Monday to Friday. Many public secondary schools in FCT do not have school buses for students and this has resulted to why most students in FCT trek to their schools. Bello, (2019) concluded that the poor educational system that did not provide school buses for the movement of students and teachers is responsible for students trekking to schools.

Economic hardship

The economic hardship in Nigeria and especially in FCT the capital of Nigeria is among the factors responsible for why many students in public secondary schools in FCT trek to schools. Economic hardship according to Ogunode, Olofinkua, and Sunmonu, (2024) is an economic activities that is constantly decrease and the decline affects wide economic activities which leads to inflation, unemployment and high standard of living among the citizens. Economic hardship also implies an economic situation that whereby citizens of a country cannot afford to meet up with their economic need as a result of inflation unemployment, high debt burden, low direct investment and high poverty. Economic hardship, inflation and subsidy removal in Nigeria has led to students trekking to schools in Federal capital territory, Abuja (Ogunode, Afolabi & Adi 2024; Ogunode & Chukwuemeka, 2023;Okeke, 2024).

Concept of Academic Performance

Ogunode and Josiah, (2023) defined academic performance of students as the total learning outcome of the students in the educational institutions which includes the knowledge, social and communication skills and ideas acquired and retained through their course of study. Academic performance refers to all organized educational programmes and knowledge a learner or student achieves or acquires in the school environment as a result of academic activities. For Ogunsaju (2004), student academic performance has been a major determinant of schools' effectiveness. Mullins (2005) defined effectiveness as the extent to which managers achieve the output

requirement of their position. Managerial effectiveness is defined in terms of output rather than input, by what a school manager achieves rather than what he/she does. Mullins postulated two basic dimensions of perceiving academic performance. The two perspectives were “low and high”. Low academic performance implies poor grade or score in test and high academic performance means good grade or score in a test or examination.

Oloyede (2008) classified students’ assessment into three areas (i) cognitive (ii) affective and (iii) psychomotor. The first type of assessment is typically academic. The second is adjustment while the third entails the development of motor skills. Furthermore, students’ academic performance is the achievement of student learning, mastery of curriculum and acquisition of social skills that help students to become useful and relevant in their respective societies. Similarly, Foster and Young (2004) conceptualized student academic performance as the parameter for determining the worth and carrying capacities of the students. Additionally, as pointed out by Oloyede (2008), the level of academic skill necessary for successful entry into the present day job market, with or without a university education, has risen to the point that a focus on achieving academic success is necessary for all students throughout every year of schooling from nursery/primary to the university level. Academic performance is the total knowledge, skills and behaviour a student or learner acquires or gains from an organized test or examinations in educational institutions. Academic performance can also be viewed by Ogunode et al (2023) as the achievement of an organized curriculum, development of skills and acquisition of knowledge that can make the learner useful in society.

Impact Long Distance Trekking on Students Academic Performance

There are many impact of long distance trekking on students’ academic performance in the schools. These impacts includes; reduction in the studies times and habits, health challenge and poor school attendance and physical exhaustion and fatigue.

Reduction in Studies time and habits

Trekking long distances according to Ugbede-Ojo (2024) not only causes physical exhaustion but also reduces the time available for students to focus on their studies. Many students return home late in the evening, leaving little or no time to review the day’s lessons or complete assignments. This time limitation affects their ability to keep up with their classmates, as personal study and revision are key to reinforcing what is taught in class. Students who live closer to school or have access to transportation are at an advantage, as they can use the time saved from commuting to focus on their studies. Time spent trekking each day could instead be used for homework or rest, both of which contribute significantly to academic success.

Health challenge and poor school attendance

The physical exertion from trekking long distances as noted by Ugbede-Ojo (2024) also affects students’ health. Exposure to adverse weather conditions such as heat, rain, or dust often leads to illnesses such as malaria, respiratory infections, or heat exhaustion. When students frequently fall ill, they tend to miss school, leading to poor attendance, which directly impacts their academic performance. In government secondary schools, absenteeism due to illness is a widespread issue, more so in areas with limited access to healthcare. When students fall ill, they often lack timely medical attention, which extends their absence from school. This recurring absenteeism leads to missed lessons, making it difficult for students to keep up with their academic responsibilities. Muhammed (2015) who confirmed that school long walking to schools has negative impact on students‘ academic performance.

Physical exhaustion and fatigue

One of the most immediate effects of trekking long distances according to Ugbede-Ojo (2024) is physical exhaustion. Many students in government schools walk several kilometers each day to

reach school, often starting their journey early in the morning. By the time they arrive, they are already fatigued, which affects their ability to concentrate, participate in class, and retain information. Physical exhaustion also diminishes cognitive abilities such as focus, memory retention, and problem-solving skills. For students who have additional household responsibilities, such as chores or caring for younger siblings, the daily routine becomes even more difficult. The fatigue caused by trekking, combined with limited rest, leads to a decline in academic performance since these students cannot fully engage with their lessons. Muhammed (2010) and Ogunode, and Edet, (2023) noted a positive relationship that exists between student trekking to schools student burnout and fatigue

Poor academic performance

Trekking long distances also takes a toll on students' mental well-being. The daily routine of waking up early and embarking on a tiring journey to school creates stress, frustration, and affects students' academic performance in the schools (Ugbede-Ojo 2024; Musa, 2023). Ogunode, Hammadu, Ahmed & Ojo (2021) and Ogunode, Audu, Ahaotu, (2020) observed that students are learners in educational institutions. Studentship started from the early child education to basic education to secondary school education and ends in the higher institutions. Higher institutions students are learners in the higher institutions. Higher institutions students are matured learners. Students in higher institutions are aged from 18 years and above. The learning programme of many Nigerian students have been affected by the subsidy removal. Learning programme in most Nigerian educational institutions are anchored on movement from students' homes to schools. Most students or learners in Nigeria move from their homes to schools especially in the basic schools and senior secondary schools. Musa, (2023) and Mhiliwa (2015) discovered that trekking to school affected students' academic performance and trekking has affected their reading habits in the schools. Assessment of effect of travelling distance among students in community secondary schoo ls in relation to the quality of education by Galabawa and Lwaitama (2008) revealed that most of the students arrived at school late, tired and lost interest in leaning and hence, poor academic performance. Raychaudhuri, Debnath, Sen and Majumder (2010) report a positive relationship that exists between school location (closer distance to homesteads) and students' academic performance as they attend school regularly.

Findings

This paper assessed the impact of long distance trekking on students' academic performance in FCT Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) schools. The paper discovered that factors responsible for long distance trekking by public Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) students includes; high cost of transportation fares, lack of schools buses and economic hardship. The paper also identified reduction in the studies times and habits, health challenge and poor school attendance, physical exhaustion and fatigue and poor academic performance as impact of long distance trekking on students of public Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) schools in FCT.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper examined the impact of long distance trekking on students' academic performance in FCT Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) schools. The paper revealed that factors responsible for long distance trekking by public Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) students includes; high cost of transportation fares, lack of schools buses and economic hardship. The paper also identified reduction in the studies times and habits, health challenge and poor school attendance, physical exhaustion and fatigue and poor academic performance as impact of long distance trekking on students of public Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) schools in FCT. Based on this findings, the paper recommends the following:

1. Governments should provide adequate school buses to all public Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) schools in FCT to support student movement to school.
2. Principals of public Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) schools in FCT can collaborate and partner private institutions and international organizations to seek support for school buses for students and teachers.
3. Parents and communities should support public Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) schools in FCT by providing schools buses to aid students and teachers movement to schools in the territory.
4. Government should establish more public Post-Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD) in Federal Capital Territory (FCT). This will help to bring schools closer to students.

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