

Budgetary Allocation and Academic Performance of Students' in Public Secondary Schools in Nasarawa State

Nkemakolam Okorie (PhD)

Department of Political Science, Federal University of Lafia
Email: nkemokorie1234@gmail.com

Niagwan Timothy Terver

Department of Political Science, University of Jos
DOI: 10.56201/ijssmr.vol.11no2.2025.pg.64.78

Abstract

The study investigated the effect of budgetary allocations on academic performance of public senior secondary schools in Nasarawa State from 2009 to 2022. It mainly utilized secondary data obtained from Nasarawa State Ministries of Education and Finance, Budget and Planning, Federal Ministry of Education, Abuja. Other relevant information was obtained from books, periodicals and journals. The study revealed poor performance of students in external examinations such as WASSCE and SSCE within the period of study. Based on its findings, the study recommended that Nasarawa State government should increase its annual budgetary allocation to the education sector especially that of public secondary schools to at least 26% which is the benchmark by UNESCO.

Keywords: Budget, Budgetary Allocation, Academic Performance, Secondary Education

Introduction

Education is the foundation upon which developed societies are built. The future of any country lies in the quality of its education. Education remains the major tool for national socio-economic development, individual socio-economic empowerment and poverty reduction. Education is a mechanism through which the society generates that knowledge and skill required for its survival and sustenance. It improves the quality of their lives and leads to broad social benefits to individuals and society (Abada, Okuma & Ugwu, 2018). Education is the foundation upon which developed societies are built. Nations thrive to invest in education as a tool for the development of skills which can be used to produce wealth, create and sustain a suitable society (Gabriel & Tolutope, 2018).

It is an undisputable fact that education plays a vital role for the development of the individual and the society in general. It is in this light that the National Policy on Education (2016) asserts that the education of an individual is to make him a functional member of his society. As a result of this, both the government and the society have come to realize that the overall development of any nation hinges on education. Alajekwu and Obi (2011), agreeing with the above view, emphasised the need for government spending to enhance economic welfare through its spending in the provision of public good. Governments in their efforts to deliver essential services, such as education, usually draw up annual budgets to properly guide the attainment of these objectives to the citizens. Government budget is the nerve centre of the public economy. The annual budget is a document which contains the entire programme of the

government in a given fiscal year. It shows expectations and intentions of the government in a particular fiscal year. Most importantly, it contains the expected revenue and expenditure of government within a given financial year (Olomola, 2009).

There can never be any meaningful development without a well-articulated and properly implemented budget. The budget is the federal and the state governments' instrument for delivering essential public goods and services, such as education, healthcare, infrastructure and national defence to its citizens to meet their social and economic needs (Okonjo-Iweala & Osafo-Kwaako, 2007). To provide goods and services and generally carry on the business of governance, government needs to plan its financial activities and come up with detailed spending plans (King, 2003). Budgetary allocation plays an important role in the development process of any country (Usman & Ijaiya, 2010). A budget enables the authorities to decide about each individual item of revenue and expenditure in the overall context of its policies. Countries of the world and indeed other entities desiring development usually draw up budget on annual basis in order to properly guide their finance. The budget can be a veritable tool for directing and developing a nation's economy if properly implemented.

Education is one of the important sectors where governments in both developed and developing economies direct its resources with the belief that results from education expenditure will go a long way in transforming human, social, economic, cultural and other aspects of the people's lives. In order to achieve the much desired development in the education sector, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) recommends that the developing countries should allocate at least 26% of their total annual budget to the education sector.

Government expenditure in education in Nigeria is categorized under the social and community services sector. The responsibilities for administering the education sector in Nigeria are shared among the Federal, State and Local governments. Thus, in the country's constitution, education is on the concurrent list but the Federal Government is empowered to regulate all the sectors, engage in policy formation and ensure quality control. The federal government of Nigeria has been allocating certain percentages of its annual budget to the education sector with the aim of developing the sector. A cursory look at the budgetary allocations over the years showed that the successive governments Nigeria have not been able to give the desired attention to education sector as evidenced by low budgetary allocations to the sector. This has contributed to the country's low gross domestic product (G.D.P) (Ayeni & Omobude, 2018). A government that is committed to human development and economic development and economic growth will invest in education, but this is not the case in Nigeria where education receives far less than the 26% benchmark by UNESCO. A study by the World Bank in 2012 in which 20 countries in the world were selected for examination of their percentage allocation to education showed Nigeria at the bottom of the ranking.

Nasarawa State, the focal area of this study, since its inception on October 1st, 1996 is desirous of developing the education sector and as a result has been allocating certain percentage of its annual budget to sector. The annual budget documents of the successive governments underscore the importance of education and its commitment to improving the sector. Available records from the Nasarawa State Ministry of Finance show that allocations to the education sector have been on the increase annually. For example, the State allocated 12.6% of its annual budget to the education sector in 2009, in 2010, the allocation went up to 15.31%, and so forth (Nasarawa State Ministry of Finance and Budget Planning Lafia). The budgetary allocations to the Ministry of Education were expected to improve students'

academic performance in external examinations. It is against this backdrop that this study investigated the budgetary allocations to the public secondary schools in Nasarawa State from 2009 to 2022 with the aim of finding out how the budgetary allocations have impacted on the performance of students in external examinations like West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSCE).

Research Question

What is the impact of budgetary allocation on the performance of public senior secondary students in WASSCE and SSCE in Nasarawa State from 2009 to 2022?

Conceptual Review

Budget

Scholars have offered definitions of budget in the literature. Adamolakun (1983) defines budget as a financial plan embodying an estimate of proposed expenditure for a given period and the proposed means of financing them. In the same vein, Omopariola (1986) views budget as a financial or quantitative statement prepared and approved prior to a defined period in time of the policy to be pursued, during that period for the purpose of attaining given objectives. This definition recognised the fact that budget should be prepared in advance which is the planning feature of budget. It also captured another important aspect of budget which is that budget is prepared with the objective of attaining specific objectives. Meigs and Meigs (2004) define budget as “a comprehensive financial plan, setting forth the expected route for achieving the financial and operational goals of an organisation”.

Generally speaking, budget is something more than an estimate of revenue and expenditure as portrayed in the above reviewed definitions. It has developed into an elaborate system of management which includes not only a plan of public revenue and expenditure but the whole material finances which are disclosed in ministerial statement placed before the legislature and the orderly administration of the financial affairs of government. Agreeing with the above view, Blattachanya (2000) puts it concisely that a budget is more than estimates of revenue and expenditures, but encompasses reports regarding how government managed its affairs in the previous year, the condition of the public treasury, programme of how work should be financed.

Abdullahi (2008) sees a government budget as a political administrative instrument by which the executive and the legislative bodies endeavour to allocate resources among the various organs of government either at State or Federal levels. He further adds that a budget is basically a tool for selecting a particular mix of private and public goods and services. He sees budget as being a product of the executive and legislative organs of government. Ohanele (2010) sees budget as the most important economic instrument for government as it reflects a government’s social and economic policy priorities more than any other document. He observes that a budget translates policies, campaign promises, political commitment and goals into decision where funds should be spent and how funds should be collected. It is deducible from the above perception that a well- functioning budget is vital to the formulation and execution of government policies. In the same manner, a weak budget exacerbates socio-economic problem in the economy. The budget therefore is an effective tool for planning, coordinating, monitoring, controlling resource movements, decision making, performance evaluation and communication. It is the basis of financial planning that

helps to monitor, control and guide the economy towards planned development through efficient and effective resource utilization. Proper budgeting will aid governments to achieve its operational goals and educational development still remains a common goal of any government to its citizens, especially in developing countries of the world.

Education

According to Armstrong (2012) education is the practice of expediting learning, or knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habit acquisition. In his opinion, education can be accomplished through various means such as teaching, training, storytelling, discussion and research. The process of education requires the presence of certain key ingredients; the educator, the learner, what is to be learnt and the learning material. Education is usually formal, informal or non-formal in nature. It consists of activities that affect the way one thinks, feels and acts. Formal education has been divided into various levels of education such as primary education, secondary education and tertiary education.

Okafor (2006) views education as a conscious and purposeful effort directed toward the transmission of accumulated abilities, knowledge and attitudes from one generation to another with the ultimate intention of producing men and women who will be relevant and useful to themselves and the society. This definition is apt in the sense that it captures the primary objective of education which centres on making individuals to be useful to themselves and the society. The author believes that education is capable of developing the potentials in individuals that will enable them contribute meaningfully to their personal development and the society.

The importance of education for the development of an individual and the society cannot be overemphasized. The National Policy on Education (NPE 2016) asserts that the education of an individual is to make him a functional member of his society. The goals of education in Nigeria as contained in the (NPE, 2009) are as follows:

1. development of the individual into a morally sound, patriotic and effective citizen;
2. total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the Nigerian society and the world as a global village;
3. provision of equal access to qualitative educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels of education within and outside the formal school system;
4. the acquisition of basic tools and skills for effective living in the society; and
5. development and appreciation of one's cultural heritage and a positive attitude towards social obligation

Deducing from the above perceptions, education can be seen as the process of rearing and nurturing an individual to grow and acquire basic skills, knowledge, attitude and values that will effectively initiate him/her into his/her culture and thereby contribute meaningfully to the development of his/her society. Education is a continuous process and as a result, an individual continues to acquire education till death. Education plays vital roles in the improvement of the quality of people's life, acceleration of economic growth, harnessing of human intellect and potentials, realization of political stability, appreciation of tolerance and the institution of peace and unity.

Secondary Education

The concept, secondary education has no generally accepted definition. As a result there are many definitions of the concept in the literature. Secondary education

is a crucial tier in the hierarchy of education. It is the midway between primary and tertiary schools. As an intermediary step between primary and tertiary education, secondary education serves as a preparatory phase for youth before they enter the workplace, helping to equip a largely adolescent population with the skills, aptitudes, and social values for a productive and healthy adult life. Secondary education plays a key role in providing learners with opportunities to acquire skills that enable them to pursue higher education and to improve their skills leading to higher labour market productivity (Ngware et al., 2006). Achuonye (2007) opines that secondary education as the name implies, comes second; that is the second level of the three-tier system of education in Nigeria. He defines secondary education as the education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage. Ogbonnaya (2003) defines secondary education as the form of education which children received automatically after they have received primary school education. It constitutes post primary education and sometimes serves as a link between primary and university education.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) National Policy on Education, section 5, no 20 contains the widely accepted definition of secondary education in Nigeria. According to the policy, secondary education is the education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage. The broad goals of secondary education according to the document shall be to prepare the individual for useful living within the society and higher education. Deducing from the above definitions, it can be rightly said that secondary school is the bridge between the primary and tertiary levels. It is the spring board from where all the students of higher education take off and all primary school leavers must pass through it to become useful to themselves and society. Secondary education in Nigeria is a six year programme, comprising of the junior secondary and senior secondary, each level is of three years duration. The curriculums of the senior secondary schools are comprehensive and diversified in nature. At junior secondary level, students are taught both academic and pre-vocational studies.

Students' Academic Performance

Students' Academic performance is an amorphous, complex and multifaceted phenomenon, or construct composed of the totality of skills, attitudes, and behaviours of a learner that contribute to academic success (Kumar et al., 2021). Academic performance can be understood as the nucleus around which a whole lot of significant components of the education system revolve (Ampofo & Osei-Owusu, 2015). Scholars have offered a variety of definitions on the concept of students' performance in general. However, in spite of these differences, it essentially refers to how well students do in their educational pursuits, primarily measured through grades, test scores, overall comprehension of academic material, or other indicators of learning and knowledge acquisition. For Kumar et al. (2021, p.3092), academic performance can be defined as "the knowledge gained by students which is assessed by marks by a teacher and/or educational goals set by students and teachers to be achieved over a specific period of time". Tope (2011) provides a succinct definition of the concept which refers to students' academic performance as the performance portrayed by students in tests, course works, and examinations.

Ugoji (2015) notes that students' academic performance can be understood as the quantifiable and apparent behaviour of students within a definite period and is an aggregate of

scores fetched by students in various evaluations through class tests, mid and end semester examinations, and so on. Academic performance is thus, a term that indicates a student's achievement after completing a course or subject from an educational institution. It measures students' learning across various academic subjects, which is assessed by formative and summative assessments. It refers to the outcome of students' efforts to attain some educational goals. It is pertinent to note that researchers over the years have used a variety of ways to measure students' academic performance and these include report card grades, grade point averages, standardized test scores, teacher ratings, other cognitive test scores, grade retention and drop-out rates. However, for the purpose of this study, students' academic performance is defined as the extent to which students in Nasarawa State public senior secondary schools perform in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations (SSCE), conducted by the National Examination Council (NECO) and the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) conducted by West African Examination Council (WAEC).

Students' performance is influenced by a range of factors such as parents' educational background, students' learning capacity, school curriculum, economy of the parents, quality of teachers, and so on. Others have strongly argued that government spending on education is a key factor in promoting better students' performance. It is worth noting that a recent study of the performance of students in Unity Schools in Nigeria by Hassan et al. (2025), indicated that there is a positive correlation between education funding and students' performance. Specifically, the findings of the study showed that, an increase in the released budget in real terms was consistently associated with a higher pass rate. This study like similar others, has shown that there is indeed

a link between budgetary allocation and students' academic performance.

Theoretical framework

Progressive Theory of Public Expenditure

This study is anchored on the theory of Progressive Theory of Public Expenditure propounded by Mabel Walker in 1937. The theory is centred on the premise that the means to decide how to allocate between options is through the utilitarian ideal as applied to government budgets. The utilitarian ideal is a measure of current expenditures as an expression of balance demand and government service provision. Furthermore, the theory advocates a cordial relationship between the budget planners and the budget implementers for constant and regular increase in budgetary allocation as a necessary condition for any budget to have ultimate results. This theory is relevant to our study because it advocates for regular increase in budgetary allocation to the critical sectors of the economy of which education is one of them. Education is fundamental in human capital development and it is required for sustainable growth in all economies world over.

Review of Related literature

Olorode (2002) examined the causes of falling standard of formal education in Nigeria with Ogun State as an area of study. He argued that the key problem of education and the consequent fall of standard was poor funding. According to him, in 2002, percentage of annual budget allocated to education in Ogun State was only 11.0%, while allocation to capital expenditure (education) in 2001 was 3.2%, whereas it was 29.02% to transportation and 27.82% to general administration. In the vein,

Harrison and Simon (2014) carried out a study on assessment of the effect of budgetary practices on performance of public secondary schools in Nakuru Municipality in Kenya. The authors conducted a survey involving two respondents from each of the 22 secondary schools in Nakuru Municipality. They utilized structured questionnaire to collect primary data and descriptive statistics to analyze data collected. The multiple regression analysis results indicated that there was a strong statistically significant relationship between budgetary practices and school performance. The authors therefore concluded that budgetary practices have a strong positive effect on the performance of public secondary students in Nakuru Municipality. They recommended that there is the need to increasingly adopt and strengthen budgetary practices especially budget planning and stake holders' involvement in order to achieve a higher level of performance in public secondary schools in the study area.

Nwite (2016) analyzed financial allocations to the education sector and students performance in external examinations like WASSCE in Nigeria between 1988 and 2007. The study sought to discover whether poor performance of students at WASSCE in Nigeria could be related to inadequate funding of secondary education rather than students' learning task and ability. The study adopted correlation research design and was conducted in the South-East geo-political zone of Nigeria. The population of the study comprised all public secondary schools in the zone totaling 13,846 schools. Out of the above number, 1000 public secondary schools were randomly selected as sample population. The study discovered that financial resource allocation pattern from 1988 to 2007 to secondary schools has been fluctuating in the percentage of total budget to education from a ratio of 2.40 in 1988 and 8.09 in 2007 with poor academic performance of students in respect of the years under study. The study therefore recommended that government should strive to allocate 26% of its annual budget as recommended by UNESCO to the education sector and also a periodic audit reports exposing government officials and schools' principals who divert- education fund to non-educational uses.

Methodology

The study adopted mainly qualitative research method. Data were collected from publications of the Nasarawa State Ministries of Education, Finance, WAEC and NECO offices

Results

Table 1

Candidates Performance in WASSCE May –June 2009 – 2022

Year	Total No of candidates that sat for the examination			Candidates with five credits and above without English and Mathematics			Candidates with five credits and above including English language			Candidates with five credits and above including Mathematics			Candidates with five credits and above including English and Mathematics			Percentage of Candidates with five credits and above including Eng. and Maths.
	M	F	M + F	M	F	M + F	M	F	M + F	M	F	M + F	M	F	M + F	
2009	1896 4	1088 3	2984 7	1023	927	1950	973	547	1520	1363	808	2171	1772	100 6	2778	8.30
2010	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2011	2802 2	1783 3	4585 5	1963	1141	3104	1868	1129	2997	2079	1281	3360	1072	655	1727	3.78%
2012	2877 4	1864 8	4742 2	1158 1	7420	1900 1	1268	611	1869	1900	1424	3324	6056	401 0	1006 8	21.23%
2013	2283 3	1532 1	3815 4	1115 7	7693	1885 0	1184 2	1425	8267	1175	1557	2367	3695	285 6	6561	17.19%

2014	2071 4	1278 2	3349 6	3018	1812	4830	2999	1739	4738	5030	3271	8301	1851	106 0	2711	8.09%
2015	2037 5	1300 3	3337 8	903	533	1436	5859	3604	9263	6161	4038	1019 9	3729	245 7	6186	18.53%
2016	2066 4	1339 4	3405 8	764	596	1362	1149 0	7436	1890 6	1448 8	9363	2385 1	9827	633 5	1616 2	47.45%
2017	7718	7448	1516 7	129	129	258	5761	5626	1138 7	6206	6151	1225 7	5308	518 1	1048 9	61.15%
2018	2624 8	2112 5	4737 3	1329 0	1122 9	2451 9	1830 3	1521 7	3352 0	1143 9	9692	2113 1	1143 9	969 2	2113 1	44.61%
2019	1697 8	1257 2	2955 0	5428	1097 8	1640 6	1068 2	8144	1882 6	1344 0	1043 1	2387 1	1003 8	775 9	1779 7	60.23%
2020	1700 8	1292 9	2993 7	7135	1214 9	1928 4	1133 1	8861	2019 2	1147 4	8927	2040 1	9075	700 9	1608 4	53.73%
2021	1359 5	1130 4	2489 9	763	4376	5139	1178 0	9990	2177 0	1235 6	1053 4	2289 0	1150 6	977 4	2128 0	85.47%
2022	1459 5	1230 4	2689 9	773	4476	5249	1278 0	1009 0	2287 0	1335 6	1153 4	2489 0	1250 6	987 4	2238 9	85.78%

Source: Nasarawa State Ministry of Education Lafia (2023)

Table 11
Candidates Performance in SSCE Examination 2009 – 2022

Year	Total No of candidates that sat for the examination			Candidates with five credits and above without English and Mathematics			Candidates with five credits and above including English language			Candidates with five credits and above including Mathematics			Candidates with five credits and above including English and Mathematics			Percentage of Candidates with five credits and above including Eng. and Maths.
	M	F	M + F	M	F	M + F	M	F	M + F	M	F	M + F	M	F	M + F	
2009	2299 6	1296 7	3596 3	1327 6	9137	2241 3	1190 7	8967	2087 4	1212 4	8139	2026 3	1015 6	8304	1946 0	54.11%
2010	1925 1	9376	2862 7	1227 0	8251	2052 1	1067 5	8651	1932 6	1126 8	7158	1842 6	9026	8157	1718 3	60.02%
2011	2019 6	1123 4	3143 0	1298 7	8254	2124 1	9601	6587	1618 5	1310 4	7802	2090 6	9238	6701	1593 9	78.92%
2012	1856 7	1020 4	2877 1	1300 1	9236	2223 7	1067 5	9258	1993 3	1253 0	8267	2079 7	7120	5284	1240 4	43.11%
2013	1925 1	9376	2862 7	1227 0	8251	2052 1	1067 5	8651	1932 6	1126 8	7158	1842 6	9026	8157	1718 3	60.02%
2014	1776 1	1668 0	2944 1	1234 6	8095	2044 1	1045 9	8781	1724 0	1024 6	6728	1697 4	8709	5629	1433 8	48.70%

2015	1525 6	1086 1	2611 7	1303 8	9220	2225 8	1148 5	7975	1948 0	1130 2	8062	1936 4	9994	6998	1699 2	72.93%
2016	1429 4	9003	2329 7	1355 1	8555	2210 6	1255 6	7911	2048 7	1227 5	7696	1997 1	1140 2	7118	1852 1	79.40%
2017	2149 0	1484 3	3633 3	178.8	1127	2915	1855 0	1286 2	3141 2	1862 0	1288 1	3150 1	1715 2	1188 0	2903 2	79.90%
2018	1925 1	9376	2862 7	1227 0	8251	2052 1	1067 5	8651	1932 6	1126 8	7158	1842 6	9026	8157	1718 3	60.02%
2019	1776 1	1668 0	2944 1	1234 6	8095	2044 1	1045 9	8781	1724 0	1024 6	6728	1697 4	8709	5629	1433 8	48.70%
2020	1525 6	1086 1	2511 7	1303 8	9220	2225 8	1148 5	7975	1948 0	1130 2	8062	1936 4	9994	6998	1699 2	72.93%
2021	2149 0	1484 3	3633 3	1178 1	1127 0	2395 1	1855 0	1286 2	3141 2	1862 0	1288 1	3150 1	1715 2	1188 0	2903 2	79.90%
2022	1429 4	9003	2329 7	1355 1	8555	2210 6	1255 6	7911	2048 7	1227 5	7696	1997 1	1140 2	7118	1852 1	79.49%

Source: Nasarawa State Ministry of Education Lafia (2023)

Table 1 on candidates performance in WASSCE shows that in 2009, a total number of 29847 candidates sat for WASSCE. Out of that number 2778 representing 8.3% had five credits and above including English and Mathematics. In the vein, table 11 which is on candidates' performance in SSCE shows that 35963 sat for SSCE in the same year. Out of that number, 19460 candidates representing 54.11% passed with five credits and above including English and Mathematics.

In 2010, the candidates performance in WASSCE was not available. A total of 28627 candidates sat of SSCE and 17183 candidates which represents 60.02% had five credits and above including English and Mathematics.

In 2011, 28022 candidates sat for WASSCE and 1727 candidates representing 21.23% obtained five credits and above including English and Mathematics. In the case of SSCE, 31430 sat for the examination in the same year. Out of that number, 15939 candidates which represents 78.92% obtained five credits and above including English and Mathematics.

In the year 2012, the total number of candidates who sat for WASSCE was 47422. Out of that number, 10,068 candidates representing 21.23% had five credits and above including English and Mathematics. Similarly, 28771 sat for SSCE, 12404 candidates which represents 43.11% had five credit and above including English and Mathematics.

A total number of 38154 candidates sat for WASSCE in 2013. The number of candidates who passed with five credits and above including English and Mathematics was 6561 which represents 17.19% of the candidates that sat for the examination. In the same vein, 28627 candidates sat for SSCE in the same year. 17183 candidates representing 60.02% had five credits and above including English and Mathematics.

In 2014, a total of 33496 candidates wrote WASSCE, out of that number, 2711 candidates representing 8.09% obtained five credits and above including English and Mathematics. In the same year, 29441 candidates sat for SSCE, out of that number, 14338 candidates representing 48.70% had five credits and above including English and Mathematics.

In 2015, the total number of candidates who sat for WASSCE was 33378. Out of that number, 6186 candidates representing 18.53% obtained five credits and above including English and Mathematics. In the same vein, a total of 26117 candidates wrote SSCE. Out of that number, 16992 candidates which represents 72.93% obtained five credits and above including English and Mathematics.

A total number of 34058 candidates sat for WASSCE in 2016. Out of that number, 16162 candidates representing 47.45% had five credits and above including English and Mathematics. In the case of SSCE in the same year, 23297 candidates sat for the examination, 18321 candidates representing 79.40% obtained five credits and above including English and Mathematics.

In 2017, the total number of candidates who sat for WASSCE was 15167. A total of 10489 which represents 61.15% had five credits and above including English and Mathematics. Similarly, 36333 candidates sat for SSCE in the same year. Out of that number, 29032 representing 79.90% obtained five credits and above including English and Mathematics.

In 2018, 47373 candidates sat for WASSCE and 21131 representing 44.61% obtained five credits and above including English and Mathematics. In the same year, a total of 28627 candidates wrote SSCE. Out of that number, 17183 candidates which represents 60.02% had five credits and above including English and Mathematics.

In 2019, a total of 29,550 candidates sat for WASSCE. Out of that number, 17797 candidates representing 60.23% obtained five credits and above including English and Mathematics. In the same vein, 29441 candidates sat for SSCE and 14338 candidates which represents 48.70% had five credits and above including English and Mathematics.

In 2020, the total number of candidates who sat for WASSCE was 29937. Out of that number, 16084 candidates representing 53.73% of the total candidates had five credits and above including English and Mathematics. In the same year, 25117 candidates wrote SSCE and 16992 obtained five credits and above including English and Mathematics.

With respect to the year 2021, 24899 candidates sat for WASSCE. Out of that number, 21280 candidates representing 85.4% had five credits and above including English and Mathematics. In the same year, 36333 candidates wrote SSCE, out of that number 29032 candidates representing 79.90% obtained five credits and above including English and Mathematics.

In 2022, a total of 26899 sat for WASSCE. Out of that number, 22389 candidates representing 85.78% had five credits and above including English and Mathematics. In the same vein, 23297 candidates sat for SSCE. Out of this number, 18521 candidates representing 79.49% had five credits and above including English and Mathematics.

Going by the statistics in table I on the performance of candidates in WASSCE, the percentage of candidates who had five credits and above including Mathematics and English from 2009 to 2020 was low. The candidates performance between 2021 and 2022 was quite impressive. This impressive performance could be attributed to recruitment of new teachers by the state government between 2020/2021 and 2021/ 2022 academic sessions. With respect to SSCE as shown in table II, students' performance during the period understudy was a bit better as many of them had five credits and above including English and Mathematics. The emphasis on five credits including English and Mathematics is that in Nigeria, what qualifies candidates to gain admission into Universities is five credits including English and Mathematics.

Comparatively, the candidates' performance in SSCE conducted by National Examination Council (NECO) was better than their performance in WASSCE which is conducted by West African Examination Council (WAEC) during the year under review.

Discussion of Findings

The available data obtained from the Nasarawa State Ministry of Education, Lafia and WAEC and NECO offices, indicated poor performance of students especially in WASSCE since many of the students could not obtain five credits including English language and Mathematics which is the requirement for admission into higher institutions like university in Nigeria. The students however, on comparative note did better in SSCE. This finding agreed with the findings of Olorode (2002), Harrison and Simon (2014), Nwite (2016) in their separate works on why there is poor performance of students in external examination. Also, the study found out that

budgetary allocations to the ministry of education from 2009 to 2022 did not impact positively on the performance of students in external examinations like WASSCE and SSCE examination

Conclusion

The study discovered that there was never a year the State government budgeted up to 26% of its annual budget to the education sector as recommended by the UNESCO. Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore concluded that Nasarawa State government did not give adequate budgetary allocation to the secondary education sector that would lead to better educational performance of students of public secondary schools in external examinations in the State during the period under study.

Recommendations

1. The Nasarawa State government should increase its budgetary allocations to 26% in line with UNESCO's recommended benchmark for the education sector.
2. The schools should be encouraged to always organize intensive extra-lessons for the final year students.
3. Teachers should be encouraged to always make use of past question papers to prepare students for external examinations
4. The government should always motivate teachers for better performance.
5. There should be incentives for best performing schools in the State.

References

- Abada, U.A, Okuma, N.C, & Ugwu, K.O (2018). The effects of budgetary allocation on education sector reform agenda: Evidence from Nigerian public sector. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Review*, 6(4), 12 – 30
- Abdullahi, Y. S. (2008). *Public financial management in Nigeria, principles, practices and issues*. Abuja: Primer Education Institute.
- Achuonye, O. (2007). *Educational research: basic issues and methodology*. Ibadan: Wisdom publishing Limited.
- Ademolekun, L. (1983). *Politics and administration in Nigeria*. Lagos: Spectrum Books Ltd.
- Alajekwu, U. B., & Obi, C.O. (2011). Impact of government expenditure on economic growth in Nigeria, International bank finance. *International Journal of Public Finance*, 2(2) 70 – 74.
- Ampofo, E., & Osei-Owusu, B. (2015). Students, academic performance as mediated by students' academic ambition and effort in public senior high schools in Ashanti Mampong municipality of Ghana, *International Journal of Academic Research and Reflection*, 35(5), 19-35
- Blatterchanya, M. (2000). *Public administration*. Kokala: The World Press Private Ltd.
- Hassan, E., Groot, W., & Volante, L. (2025). The relationship between education funding and student performance in unity schools in Nigeria. *Educational Science*, 15(1), 86
- Hogye, M (1998). *Theoretical approaches to public budgeting*. Retrieved 12th March 2021 from: <http://igiosihu/publication/2002/2016/101>.

- King, D. T. (2003). *Transition period summary report*. Canada: Uzder Publisher
- Kumar, S., Agarwal, M., Agarwal, N. (2021). Defining and measuring academic performance of Hei students: A critical review, *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education*, 12(6), 3091-3105
- Meig, W, & Meig, F. (2004). *Accounting the basic business decision*. New York. USA, Mc Graw – Hill Book Company.
- Nwite, O. (2016). Financial allocation to secondary education in Nigeria: Implications for students' performance. *Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 6(3), 42 – 47.
- Ohanele, J.C. (2010). Government budget in Nigeria: who benefits? *The Punch Newspaper* March, 10.
- Okafor, F. C. (2006). *Philosophy of education: A third world perspective*. Enugu, Enugu State Publishing Company.
- Okonjo-Iweala, N., & Osafo, K. P. (2007). *Nigeria economic reforms: Progress and challenges*. Working paper H6. Washington DC: The Brooklings Institute.
- Oloredo, O. (2002). Falling standard of education in Osun state: The way forward. Paper presented at the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) Ife Central Local Government public lecture on the falling standard of education in Osun state.
- Olomola, A.S. (2009). Strategies and consequences of budgetary reforms in Nigeria. A paper for presentation at the 6th annual congress of the Institute of International Finance (IIPF), Cape Town, South Africa.
- Tope, O. (2011). *The influence of peer group on adolescents' academic performance: A case study of some selected schools in Ogun state, Nigeria*. Egobooster Books
- Ugoji, E. N. (2015). The impact of counselling on the academic performance of secondary schools' students. *Africa Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 8(2), 67-73

