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Evaluation Of Out-Of-School Rate In Cross River State

OBILOR, Esezi Isaac[1], IKPI, Patience Eni[2] & MIWARI, Goodluck Uwaks[3]

Department of Educational Foundations
Faculty of Education
Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
[1]isaac.obilor@ust.edu.ng [2]patienceikpi82@gmail.com [3]goodluck.miwri@ust.edu.ng

ABSTRACT
This study evaluated out-of-school rate in Cross River State. The evaluation research design using the CIPP evaluation model was adopted with four research questions and four hypotheses. The population of the study was 4,760 teachers of public primary and junior secondary schools in Cross River State. The sample size of 369 teachers was determined using the Taro Yamane formula, while stratified and proportionate random sampling techniques were used to select the teachers. Data was collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Out-of-School Rate Questionnaire (OOSRQ)", structured on a four-point modified Likert scale. The instrument's reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding coefficients of 0.87, 0.79, 0.81 and 0.79. The research questions were answered using means and standard deviations, while the null hypotheses were tested using One-way Analysis of Variance at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings of this study revealed that contextual factors, inadequate educational resources, ineffective programmes of government and stakeholders and poor outcomes of intervention programmes were seen by teachers as factors responsible for the out-of-school rate in Cross River State. It is recommended, among others, that the government, non-governmental organisations, multinational companies, and rich individuals should make concerted efforts at reducing poverty, high cost of living, insecurity, and unsafe cultural and religious beliefs, providing adequate educational resources redesign intervention programmes and evaluate the real impact on out-of-school reduction.
Keywords: Children, enrolment, evaluation, intervention, out-of-school, rate

INTRODUCTION

Education is globally recognised as a fundamental human right and a key driver of socio-economic development. In Nigeria, universal access to education is enshrined in the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004, which mandates free and compulsory basic education for every child (Odinkalu, 2014). The Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004 established free and compulsory basic education for all children in Nigeria. Through the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), the programme supports classroom construction, instructional materials, teacher training, and monitoring to ensure access to primary and junior secondary education. This legal framework is designed to make education both accessible and compulsory, thus reducing the incidence of children staying out of school [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 2012].

Secondly, the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Programme which commenced in 2016 was also provided to aid financial support to poor households on the condition that children are enrolled and attend school regularly. This policy addresses financial barriers such as the inability to afford books, uniforms,

or transportation of school attendees. Okoye (2019) affirmed that in 2020, under the Basic Education Transformation Agenda (BETA), cash transfers were specifically targeted at mothers to incentivise enrolment and retention of children in schools. The Federal Government of Nigeria also, through the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, provides one nutritious meal a day to pupils in public primary schools. This intervention encourages school enrolment and retention, particularly among children from low-income households, while simultaneously improving nutrition and supporting local farmers (Okoye, 2019). There is also a recent expansion under the Renewed Hope Agenda of 2024 which aims to reach up to 20 million out-of-school children by 2026.

All these programmes, however, have not been able to reduce the number of school dropouts in Cross Rivers State. According to Oyekan, Ayorinde, and Adenuga (2023), Nigeria accounts for the highest number of out-of-school children in the world, with over 20 million children aged 5–14 years out of school due to poor funding of the educational system, including insufficient teaching materials and, shortage of trained teachers. These constitute major barriers to school attendance and retention. Ede and Edinyang (2018) echoed that this situation is particularly difficult in states where socioeconomic, cultural, and governance factors intersect to exacerbate the crisis, of which Cross River State is one. This is confirmed by Bassey and Owan (2021) who added that the alarming increase in the population of children who are not enrolled in or have dropped out of school is due to corruption, poor funding of education, poverty, and related factors.

Thus, one persistent challenge confronting Nigeria's education sector is not merely the absence of policies but the ineffective implementation of existing ones. Okoroma (2016) emphasised that the rising rates of out-of-school children in Nigeria are largely due to weak policy implementation, occasioned by lack of political will, corruption, and discontinuity of programmes. These structural weaknesses have limited the capacity of government policies to achieve their objectives, thereby exacerbating educational inequalities and leaving millions of children out of school. Policies such as the Universal Basic Education (UBE), School Feeding Programme, Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Programme, and girl-child education initiatives were designed to increase school enrolment and reduce dropout rates. Unfortunately, inadequate monitoring mechanisms, poor transparency in the allocation of resources, and frequent changes in administrative priorities have led to uneven implementation across senatorial districts. Policies are often abandoned with a change in government, undermining the sustainability of interventions. Such inconsistencies in policy implementation reduce the long-term impact of interventions meant to improve school access and retention. Umar and Tahir (2019) pointed out that mismanagement of funds and diversion of resources meant for schools directly affect inputs such as teaching materials, teacher recruitment, and infrastructure, hindering the effectiveness of any programme. When these inputs are inadequate or absent, children, particularly in rural and marginalised communities, are more likely to remain out of school. This aligns with the resource allocation variable of this study, which seeks to determine whether the available resources are equitably distributed and effectively utilised in Cross River State.

In addition, Okoroma (2016) opined that Nigeria's educational system should adopt models practised in countries such as Japan, China, and India, which are culturally sensitive and emphasise long-term human capital development. To have a deeper understanding of what is responsible for the increasing rate of out-of-school children, from an evaluation perspective, an understanding of the effectiveness of existing policies, interventions, and stakeholder efforts is necessary to assess the extent to which interventions such as school feeding programmes, conditional cash transfers, and infrastructural development have been successful in reducing the out-of-school population (Ekpe & Okon, 2020).

In Cross River State, factors such as poverty, child labour, inadequate school infrastructure, insecurity, cultural practices, and displacement due to communal conflicts contribute significantly to children being out of school [United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), 2021]. Thus, without a systematic evaluation, it is difficult to determine the effectiveness of government and non-governmental initiatives in reversing this trend.

To provide a structured approach for evaluating out-of-school rate in Cross River State, this study adopted the Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) evaluation model developed by Daniel Stufflebeam in 1971. The model offers a comprehensive framework for assessing the effectiveness of educational programmes by analysing the conditions under which they operate, the resources employed, the processes of implementation, and the outcomes achieved.

Within this framework, the Context component focuses on the socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental factors influencing children's access to education in Cross River State. The Input component examines the adequacy and effective utilisation of educational resources such as funding, infrastructure, instructional materials, and teacher availability. The Process component evaluates how government and non-governmental interventions such as the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme, Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT), and School Feeding Programme are implemented, monitored, and sustained. Finally, the Product component assesses the outcomes of these interventions in terms of school enrolment, attendance, and retention.

By applying the CIPP model, the study systematically evaluates how contextual realities, resource inputs, and implementation processes shape the outcomes of educational interventions. This framework enables the identification of gaps between policy intentions and actual results, providing actionable insights for improving educational access and reducing the number of out-of-school children in Cross River State.

Statement of the Problem

The rising out-of-school rate in Cross River State presents a major developmental challenge. Despite federal and state government interventions such as the UBE programme, free tuition policies, and school feeding initiatives, the rate of school dropout and non-enrolment continues to escalate (Okoi & Ndem, 2019). This persistent problem suggests that existing measures may not be achieving their intended outcomes or that implementation gaps exist.

From an evaluation standpoint, there is limited empirical evidence assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of these programmes in Cross River State. This lack of systematic evaluation makes it difficult for stakeholders to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas of improvement. If this issue increase in out-of-school rates is not addressed, the situation will undermine the state's educational goals, human capital development, and Nigeria's attainment of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 (World Bank, 2021), which emphasises inclusive and equitable quality education for all by 2030.

This raises critical questions such as: What factors contribute to the increasing rate of out-of-school? Have policies and interventions been effectively implemented at the state and community levels? What are the outcomes of these interventions on enrolment and retention of children in schools? Are there gaps between policy intentions and outcomes?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the out-of-school rate in Cross River State using the Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) evaluation model. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. investigate the contextual factors (socioeconomic and environmental conditions) contributing to the out-of-school rate in Cross River State.
2. assess the adequacy of educational resources (teachers, funding, instructional materials, and school infrastructure) in reducing the out-of-school rate in Cross River State.
3. examine the implementation of intervention programmes by the government and stakeholders in reducing out-of-school rate in Cross River State.
4. determine the outcomes (school enrolment, attendance, and retention) of government and community intervention programmes on out-of-school rate in Cross River State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What contextual factors contribute to the out-of-school rate in Cross River State?
2. What educational resources are utilised by the government and stakeholders to address the problem of out-of-school rate in Cross River State?

3. What intervention programmes are carried out by the government and stakeholders to reduce out-of-school rate in Cross River State?
4. What are the outcomes of government and community intervention programmes on the out-of-school rate in Cross River State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of teachers of Cross River North, Central, and South Senatorial Districts on the contextual factors contribute to out-of-school rate in Cross River State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of teachers of Cross River North, Central, and South Senatorial Districts on the adequacy of educational resources adequately utilised by government and stakeholders to address the problem of out-of-school rate in Cross River State.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of teachers of Cross River North, Central, and South Senatorial Districts on the intervention programmes used in reducing out-of-school rate in Cross River State.
4. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of teachers of Cross River North, Central, and South Senatorial Districts that government and community intervention programmes increase enrolment, attendance, and retention in Cross River State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the evaluation research design and employed the CIPP evaluation model. A sample size of 369 teachers (made up of classroom teachers, head teachers, and principals) of both primary and junior secondary schools was drawn from the population of 4,760 teachers across the three Senatorial Districts of Cross River State. The Taro Yamane's model of sample size determination was used to fix the sample size, and the stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample. A structured questionnaire titled "Out-of-School Rate Questionnaire" (OOSRQ) was used for data collection. The items were structured and scored on a 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Agree = 3, Strongly Agree = 4. The instrument was validated by three experts in the Measurement and Evaluation Unit of the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. The reliability coefficients of 0.80, 0.79, 0.81 and 0.79 were obtained using Cronbach's Alpha method, while the research questions were answered using Mean and Standard Deviation and null hypotheses tested with One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. A null hypothesis is rejected when the p-value is less than or equal to the α-value, but is not rejected when the p-value is greater than the α-value.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *What contextual factors contribute to out-of-school rate in Cross River State?*

The answer to this research question is provided using the results presented in table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics on Contextual Factors that Contribute to Out-of-School Rate in Cross River State.

S/No	Items	North (N_1 = 118)			Central (N_2 = 123)			South (N_3 = 128)			$\frac{\bar{x}_1 + \bar{x}_2 + \bar{x}_3}{3}$	Rmk
		$\bar{X}_1$	SD_1	Rmk	$\bar{X}_2$	SD_2	Rmk	$\bar{X}_3$	SD_3	Rmk		
1	Poverty among households contribute to out-of-school rates in Cross River State	3.49	1.06	A	3.54	1.16	SA	3.63	1.02	SA	3.55	SA
2	High cost of living and lack of financial support prevent many parents from sending children to school	3.47	1.10	A	3.62	1.04	SA	3.56	1.03	SA	3.55	SA
3	Insecurity, communal clashes, kidnapping make environments unsafe causing parents to keep their children at home.	3.11	1.06	A	2.98	1.00	A	3.16	1.01	A	3.05	A
4	Cultural and religious beliefs discourage families to send their girls to attend school.	3.11	1.10	A	3.02	1.00	A	3.15	1.07	A	3.09	A
5	Distance between home and school discourages regular attendance among school-age children.	3.58	1.04	SA	3.59	.1.10	SA	3.58	1.04	SA	3.58	SA
6	Level of parental education influences children to go to school.	3.61	1.02	SA	3.51	1.01	SA	3.68	1,02	SA	3.60	SA
	Grand Mean	**3.39**		A	**3.37**		A	**3.46**		A	**3.31**	A

Table 1 presents data on contextual factors that contribute to out-of-school rate in primary and junior secondary schools (items 1 to 6). The responses of teachers and head teachers and principals with regard to this have a mean score showing strong agreement to contextual factors ($3.50 \leq \times \leq 4.00$), except items 3 and 4, which show agreement ($2.50 \leq \times \leq 3.49$). Also, Grand Means of the three groups indicate strong agreement on contextual factors for the North, Central and South Senatorial Districts. Thus, the three groups of teachers and head teachers and principals have strong agreement that contextual factors contribute to the rate of out-of-school. This implies that teachers and principals recognise contextual factors as a major contributor to out-of-school rate in Cross River State.

Research Question 2: *To what extent are educational resources utilised by the government and stakeholders to address the problem of out-of-school rate in Cross River State?*

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics on the Extent of Educational Resources Utilised to Address the Problem of Out-of-School Rate in Cross River State.

S/No	Items	North (N_1 = 118)			Central (N_2 = 123)			South (N_3 = 128)			$\frac{\bar{x}_1 + \bar{x}_2 + \bar{x}_3}{3}$	Rmk
		$\bar{X}_1$	SD_1	Rmk	$\bar{X}_2$	SD_2	Rmk	$\bar{X}_3$	SD_3	Rmk		
7	There is adequate number of qualified teachers in public schools across the State	2.08	1.04	LE	2.10	1.03	LE	2.25	1.03	LE	2.14	LE
8	Schools are adequately supplied with learning materials such as textbooks, desks, and writing materials.	2.03	1.10	LE	2.21	1.00	LE	2.16	1.06	LE	2.13	LE
9	School environments and classroom buildings are sufficient and conducive for learning and retaining children in school."	2.12	1.10	LE	2.12	1.02	LE	2.09	1.10	LE	2.11	LE
10	Government funding of basic education is sufficient to meet the needs of schools.	2.11	1.01	LE	2.20	1.00	LE	2.12	1.00	LE	2.14	LE
11	Parents and community members contribute financially or materially to the improvement of schools.	3.11	1.03	HE	3.14	1.10	HE	3.05	1.03	HE	3.10	HE
12	There are enough schools within the reach of children in all communities	2.96	1.10	HE	3.07	1.00	HE	3.04	1.00	HE	3.02	HE
	Grand Mean	**2.40**		**LE**	**2.47**		**D**	**2.45**		**LE**	**2.44**	**LE**

Table 2 presents data on educational resources implemented by the government and stakeholders to address the problem of out-of-school rate in primary and junior secondary schools in Cross Rivers State (items 7 to 12). The responses of the teachers have mean scores indicating "Low Extent" implementation of educational resources by government and stakeholders to address the problem of out-of-school rate ($1.50 \leq \bar{x} \leq 2.49$), except items 11 and 12, which show "High Extent" implementation ($2.50 \leq \bar{x} \leq 3.49$). Also, the grand means of the three groups indicate a "Low Extent" implementation of educational resources for North, Central, and South Senatorial Districts of Cross Rivers State. This implies that teachers in Cross River State recognise that educational resources are implemented to a "Low Extent" as factors to address the problem of out-of-school rate in Cross River State.

Research Question 3: *What intervention programmes are carried out by the government and stakeholders to reduce out-of-school rate in Cross River State?*

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Intervention Programmes Carried out by Government and Stakeholders to Reduce the Problem of Out-of-School Rate in Cross River State

S/No	Items	North (N_1 = 118)			Central (N_2 = 123)			South (N_3 = 128)			$\frac{\bar{x}_1 + \bar{x}_2 + \bar{x}_3}{3}$	Rmk
		$\bar{X}_1$	SD_1	Rmk	$\bar{X}_2$	SD_2	Rmk	$\bar{X}_3$	SD_3	Rmk		
13	Government policies and programmes aimed at reducing the rate of out-of-school children are effectively implemented	2.12	1.01	D	2.25	1.01	D	2.16	1.00	D	2.17	D
14	School heads regularly monitor and report absenteeism and dropout cases to education authorities.	3.08	1.10	A	3.14	1.03	A	3.04	1.10	A	3.O8	A
15	Community-based interventions (e.g., awareness campaigns) are carried out to encourage children's school attendance	3.10	1.10	A	3.07	1.05	A	3.05	1.06	A	3.07	A
16	The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme has been effectively managed in the State.	2.13	1.10	D	2.21	1.03	D	2.24	1.00	D	2.19	D
17	School feeding and scholarship programmes have improved children's motivation to attend school	3.03	1.07	A	3.10	1.06	A	3.08	1.07	A	3.07	A
18	Stakeholders (parents, community leaders, NGOs) are actively involved in implementing educational programmes.	3.07	1.05	A	3.09	1.02	A	3.05	1.00	A	3.07	A
	Grand Mean	**2.75**		A	**2.81**		A	**2.77**		A	**2.77**	A

Table 3 presents data on intervention programmes carried out by the government and stakeholders to reduce the problem of out-of-school rate in primary and junior secondary schools in Cross River State (items 13 - 18). The responses of the teachers have means lying between 2.50 and 3.49 ($2.50 \leq \bar{x} \leq 3.49$), showing "Agreement" of intervention programmes carried out by government and stakeholders, except items 13 and 16, which show "Disagreement" with their means lying between 1.50 and 2.49 ($1.50 \leq \bar{x} \leq 2.49$). Furthermore, the grand means of the three groups indicate "Agreement" on the intervention programmes carried out by the government and stakeholders to reduce the problem of out-of-school rate in primary and junior secondary schools in Cross River State. This implies that teachers in Cross River State recognise intervention programmes carried out by the government and stakeholders to reduce the problem of out-of-school rate in Cross River State.

Research Question 4: *What are the outcomes of government and community intervention programmes on out-of-school rate in Cross River State?*

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on the outcomes of government and community interventions programmes on out-of-school rate in Cross River State.

S/No	Items	North (N_1 = 118)			Central (N_2 = 123)			South (N_3 = 128)			$\frac{\bar{x}_1 + \bar{x}_2 + \bar{x}_3}{3}$	Rmk
		$\bar{X}_1$	SD_1	Rmk	$\bar{X}_2$	SD_2	Rmk	$\bar{X}_3$	SD_3	Rmk		
19	There is an increase in school enrolment in the last few years	2.12	1.07	D	2.25	1.09	D	2.16	1.00	D	2.18	D
20	The rate of students' retention in primary and junior secondary schools has improved in recent years.	2.40	1.10	D	2.02	1.03	D	2.21	1.06	D	2.21	D
21	Attendance rate has increased as a result of government and community interventions.	2.10	1.10	D	2.24	1.05	D	2.14	1.01	D	2.16	D
22	The number of children completing basic education has increased recently.	2.13	1.10	D	2.21	1.03	D	2.24	1.00	D	2.23	D
23	Interventions have helped reduce gender disparity in school enrolment	2.83	1.05	A	2.68	1.10	A	2.88	1.07	A	2.80	A
24	The general attitude of parents toward education has improved since the introduction of intervention programmes.	3.07	1.00	A	3.09	1.02	A	3.05	1.00	A	3.07	A
Grand Mean		**2.47**		**D**	**2.42**		**D**	**2.45**		**D**	**2.45**	**D**

Table 4 presents data on the outcomes of government and community interventions on the out-of-school rate in primary and junior secondary schools in Cross River State (items 19 - 24). The responses of teachers have means lying between 1.50 and 2.49 ($1.50 \leq \bar{x} \leq 2.49$), indicating "Disagreement" (items 19 - 22) that government and community interventions produced significant outcomes on reducing out-of-school rate in Cross River State. However, items 23 and 24 with means lying between 2.50 and 3.49 ($2.50 \leq \bar{x} \leq 3.49$) indicate "Agreement". Also, the grand means for the three groups indicate "Disagreement", implying that teachers recognise that intervention programmes did not produce significant outcomes. In other words, there is no significant reduction in out-of-school rate in Cross River State resulting from the government and community interventions.

Hypotheses Testing

In this section, each null hypothesis (H_0) is evaluated at the 0.05 significance level. The decision rule is as follows: If $p \leq 0.05$, we reject H_0 and conclude that there is a statistically significant difference between the responses of the three groups. On the contrary, if $p > 0.05$, we fail to reject H_0 and conclude that there is no evidence of a significant difference between the responses of the three groups. All tests are two-tailed, and degrees of freedom are reported alongside each statistic.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of teachers of Cross River North, Central, and South Senatorial Districts that contextual factors contribute to out-of-school rate in Cross River State.

Table 5: One-way Analysis of Variance on how Contextual Factors Contribute to Out-of-School Rate Across the Senatorial Districts in Cross River State

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	0.46	2	0.23	3.10	0.064	Ho Accepted
Within Groups	27.36	366	0.07			
Total	**27.83**	**368**				

Results in Table 5 reveal that at the 0.05 level of significance and df = 2; 366, F = 3.10 and p = 0.064. Since the p-value is greater than the α-value (p = 0.064 > α = 0.05), F = 3.10 is statistically significant at a 0.05 significance level [F(2, 366) = 3.10, p > 0.05]. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of teachers of Cross River North, Central, and South Senatorial Districts, that contextual factors contribute to out-of-school rate in Cross River State is not rejected. This implies that the three groups of teachers "Strongly Agree" that contextual factors (poverty, high cost of living, insecurity, cultural and religious beliefs, distance from school, and level of parents' education) contribute to the out-of-school rate in Cross River State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of teachers of Cross River North, Central, and South Senatorial Districts on the extent educational resources are utilised by government and stakeholders to address the problem of out-of-school rate in Cross River State.

Table 6: One-way Analysis of Variance on the Extent Educational Resources are Utilized by Government and Stakeholders to Address the Problem of Out-of-School Rate Across the Senatorial Districts of Cross River

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	0.31	2	0.15	2.49	0.084	Ho Accepted
Within Groups	23.22	366	0.06			
Total	**23.54**	**368**				

Results in Table 6 reveal that at the 0.05 level of significance and df = 2; 366, F = 2.49 and p = 0.084. Since the p-value is greater than the α-value (p = 0.084 > α = 0.05), F = 2.49 is statistically significant at a 0.05 significance level [F(2, 366) = 2.49, p > 0.05]. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of teachers of Cross River North, Central, and South Senatorial Districts, that educational resources are adequately utilised by government and stakeholders to address the problem of out-of-school rate in Cross River State is not rejected. This implies that the three groups of teachers recognise that there is a "Low Extent" implementation by government and stakeholders of educational resources to reduce the out-of-school rate in Cross River State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of teachers of Cross River North, Central, and South Senatorial Districts that implementation of intervention Programmes help in reducing out-of-school rate in Cross River State.

Table 7: One-way Analysis of Variance on how Implementation of Intervention Programmes Help to Reduce Out-of-School Rate Across the Senatorial Districts of Cross River

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	0.19	2	0.09	1.46	0.232	Ho Accepted
Within Groups	24.45	366	0.06			
Total	**24.64**	**368**				

Results in Table 7 reveal that at the 0.05 level of significance and df = 2; 366, F = 1.46 and p = 0.232. Since the p-value is greater than the α-value (p = 0.232 > α = 0.05), F = 1.46 is statistically significant at a 0.05 significance level [F(2, 366) = 1.46, p > 0.05]. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of teachers of Cross River North, Central and South Senatorial Districts that implementation of intervention programmes helps in reducing out-of-school rate in Cross

River State is not rejected. This implies that the three groups of teachers agree that intervention programmes help in reducing out-of-school rate in Cross River State.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of teachers and principals of Cross River North, Central, and South Senatorial Districts that intervention programmes increase enrolment, attendance, and retention in Cross River State.

Table 8: One-way Analysis of Variance on how Intervention Programmes Increase Enrolment, Attendance, and Retention Across the Senatorial Districts of Cross River

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	0.24	2	0.12	2.03	0.132	Ho Accepted
Within Groups	21.92	366	0.06			
Total	**22.16**	**368**				

Results in Table 8 reveal that at the 0.05 level of significance and df = 2; 366, F = 2.03 and p = 0.132. Since the p-value is greater than the α-value ($p = 0.132 > \alpha = 0.05$), F = 3.10 is statistically significant at a 0.05 significance level [$F(2, 366) = 2.03$, $p > 0.05$]. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of teachers of Cross River North, Central, and South Senatorial Districts that intervention programmes increase enrolment, attendance, and retention in Cross River State is not rejected. This implies that the three groups of teachers agree that government and community intervention programmes did not produce significant outcomes. In other words, there is no significant reduction in out-of-school rate in Cross River State resulting from the government and community interventions.

Summary of Findings

1. The contextual factors that contribute strongly to the out-of-school rate in Cross River State are poverty, high cost of living, insecurity, cultural and religious beliefs, distance from school, and level of parents' education. All teachers of primary and junior secondary schools in Cross River State "Strongly Agree" that these contextual factors are the major contributors to out-of-school rate in Cross River State.
2. Teachers of primary and junior secondary schools recognise that educational resources are utilised to a "Low Extent" by the government and stakeholders in addressing the problem of out-of-school rate in Cross River State.
3. Teachers of primary and junior secondary schools in Cross River State "Agree" that intervention programmes are carried out by the government and stakeholders to reduce out-of-school rate in Cross River State. Furthermore, all teachers across the three Senatorial Districts of Cross River State "Agree" that the implementation of the intervention programmes is not effective in reducing out-of-school rate in Cross River State.
4. Teachers of primary and junior secondary schools in Cross River State "Agree" that government and community intervention programmes did not improve enrolment, attendance, and retention in Cross River State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study are discussed below under the following headings: Contextual factors and out-of-school rate, educational resources and out-of-school rate, intervention programmes by government/stakeholders and out-of-school rate, and outcomes of government and community interventions and out-of-school rate.

Contextual Factors and Out-of-School Rate

The first finding of this study reveals that teachers in primary and junior secondary schools across the Senatorial Districts of Cross Rivers State "Strongly Agree" that contextual factors such as poverty, high cost of living, insecurity, cultural and religious beliefs, distance from school, and level of parents' education contribute significantly to out-of-school rate in Cross River State. This finding aligns with the

study of Ede and Edinyang (2018), which revealed that the situation of out-of-school rate is particularly difficult in states where socioeconomic, cultural, and governance factors intersect to exacerbate the problem of out-of-school rate. This is confirmed by Bassey and Owan (2021), who added that the alarming increase in the number of children who are not enrolled in or have dropped out of school is due to corruption, poor education funding, poverty, and related factors.

Educational Resources and Out-of-School Rate

Secondly, it was found that "Low Extent" implementation of educational resources contributes to a poor attitude toward schooling among students. Teachers in primary and junior secondary schools in Cross River State recognise that educational resources are used to a "Low Extent" by government and stakeholders to address the problem of out-of-school rate in Cross River State. This finding is in line with the finding of a study by Oyekan, Ayorinde, and Adenuga (2023) who reported that Nigeria accounts for the highest number of out-of-school children in the world, with over 20 million children aged 5–14 years out of school due to poor funding of the educational system, including insufficient teaching materials and, shortage of trained teachers. These constitute major barriers to school attendance and retention.

Intervention Programmes by Government/Stakeholders and Out-of-School Rate

The third finding of this study is that intervention programmes are being carried out, but it was generally agreed that implementation of intervention programmes has not been effective across the three Senatorial Districts. This result supports Okoroma's (2016) finding that distortions in the Nigerian educational system are largely the result of weak implementation, occasioned by lack of political will, corruption, and discontinuity of programmes. These structural weaknesses have limited the capacity of government policies to achieve their objectives, thereby exacerbating educational inequalities and leaving millions of children out of school.

Outcomes of Government and Community Interventions and Out-of-School Rate

The fourth finding of this study is that implementation of government and community interventions did not yield the desired results of increasing enrolment, attendance, and retention in primary and junior secondary schools in Cross River State. This finding aligns with Adebayo (2020), who found that in several Nigerian states, government-sponsored education intervention programmes have failed to achieve intended goals due to poor supervision and lack of grassroots ownership. It also resonates with the findings of Okon and Bassey (2021), who observed that community support for basic education projects is often low because of weak communication between schools and local stakeholders, resulting in limited collaboration for child enrolment and retention efforts.

CONCLUSION

This study evaluated the reasons for the out-of-school rate in primary and junior secondary schools in Cross River State. The findings revealed that contextual factors, inadequate educational resources, ineffective implementation of programmes of government and stakeholders, and poor outcomes of intervention programmes were recorded by teachers as factors responsible for the increase in out-of-school rate in Cross River State. Although little variations were observed across the three senatorial districts, statistical analysis confirmed that these differences were not significant. This implies that teachers in the State shared similar views regarding these variables. However, contextual factors such as poverty, high cost of living, insecurity, cultural and religious beliefs, distance between home and school, and level of parental education were consistently seen as major factors contributing to out-of-school rate. Teachers across the senatorial districts recognised that contextual factors made it difficult for so many children to attend school. This suggests that while other variables contribute to the out-of-school rate, contextual factors play a major role in it in the state.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government, non-governmental organisations, multinational companies, and rich individuals should make concerted efforts at reducing poverty, high cost of living, insecurity, and unsafe cultural and religious beliefs.
2. Government, non-governmental organisations, multinational companies, and rich individuals should assist in providing adequate educational resources to improve access to learning and learning conditions.
3. Government should redesign intervention programmes with stronger community involvement and monitoring.
4. Government and communities should strengthen interventions and evaluate their outcomes to ensure real impact on out-of-school reduction.

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