

## ENHANCEMENT AND RETENTION OF MALE ENROLMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF NSUKKA EDUCATION ZONE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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### **Abstract**

*The study examined ways of enhancing and retaining male enrolment in public secondary schools in Nsukka Education zone for sustainable development. The 53 male and co-educational secondary schools in Nsukka, Igbo-Etiti and Uzo-Uwani Local Government Areas formed the area of the study. The study specifically determined the extent to which the implementation of a functional curriculum and provision of employment opportunities can enhance and retain male enrolment. Four research questions and four null hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was used. The population consisted of 17,591 male students and an equal number of parents of the senior male students. The sample for the study was 752, comprising of 376 students and 376 parents. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions and t-test for the null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that both students and parents agreed that teaching of popularly demanded trades and vocations, inclusion of entrepreneurial skills in the school curriculum, reactivation of farm settlements among others will to a high extent enhance and retain male enrolment in secondary schools. T-test analysis showed significant differences in the opinions of the students and parents on the extent to which implementation of a functional curriculum and provision of employment opportunities can enhance and retain male enrolment. Five recommendations were made, including that popularly demanded trades and entrepreneurial skills should be taught in secondary schools.*

**Key Words:** Enrolment, Enhancement, Retention, Nsukka Education Zone, Sustainable Development.

### **Introduction**

Education is one of the sectors that takes a lion share of the national budget of most developing countries, including Nigeria. This is justifiably based on the obvious need for qualitative manpower in the various areas of human endeavours and sustainable national development. Sustainable development is a process for meeting

human development goals while ensuring the ability of natural systems to continue to provide the resources and ecosystem services upon which the economy and society depends (Njoku,2007). It is a process that envisions desirable finite resources necessary to provide for the needs of future generations of life on the planet, in which living conditions and resource use continue to meet human needs without undermining the "integrity, stability and beauty" of natural biotic systems (Andy; Steger, & Manfred ,2015).

The National Policy on Education (NPE) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) recognizes education as “an instrument par-excellence the means of developing human intellect, technical skills, character and effective citizenship for self-reliance and effective national development”. This means that government acknowledges that education is an invaluable tool for solving the political, cultural, social and economic problems of the nation. For education to be able to solve these problems its recipients must acquire skills, abilities, values and attitudes that will enable them contribute positively to the development of the society (Aguba, 2009). Supporting this view, Agu (2008) acknowledged that education is a tool for achieving the political, economic and other efficiencies required to meet the technological needs of the country. Education is therefore a very necessary tool if the country is to achieve accelerated national development. The efficiencies highlighted by Agu (2008) cannot be effectively achieved at the level of primary education because of the nature of the curriculum at this level. If greater efficiency is desired, then secondary and probably tertiary education becomes imperative.

For individuals to acquire secondary education, they have to enroll into the programme. Enrolment, otherwise called matriculation is the process of initiating attendance to a school. Indeed the issue of enrolment is a critical issue in the educational development of any country. The reason is because when there is massive students’ enrolment, educational administrators and planners bother about adequacy of resources and what to do with the excess manpower that will be produced. On the other hand, a decline in enrolment could have disastrous consequences such as mass illiteracy, shortage of potential manpower, moral decadence, social mal-adjustment, poverty and an ignorant citizenry (Talbert, 2012).

Apart from the issue of enrolment is the challenge of enhancement and continued retention of students in general and the male students in particular until graduation from school. Enhancement means to improve, upgrade or augment, especially in number, effectiveness, value, or attractiveness; while retention is the continued possession or preservation of the existing or original status. Enhanced male enrolment and retention in secondary schools can be effectively addressed through continuous sensitization and awareness creation in various communities ( Okwori, Manji, Kareem & Egbeta, 2014).

A number of researches including those of Ezegebe and Akubue (2012) have shown that in the past, the number of females enrolled into secondary schools and in tertiary institutions was negligible when compared to their male counterparts. Various constraints were responsible for this. These included cultural and religious factors such as early marriage, the practice of purdah by moslems, economic factors such as

the cost of acquiring education, ignorance and parochial views about the place of women in society. In recent times however, the reverse has been the trend, as male enrolment has been declining progressively, just as female enrolment has been burgeoning.

Despite the negative consequences of declining school enrolment, there is growing evidence of this phenomenon among male students in secondary schools within Nsukka Education Zone. The enrolment figures of the last six years confirm this trend. 2011/2012= 24,463, 2012/2013 = 23,087, 2013/2014 = 19,968, 2014/2015 = 22,956, 2015/2016 = 20,179, and 2016/2017 = 17,591. (Planning, Research and Statistics (PR&S) Unit (PPSMB) Nsukka Education Zone). Those involved can be classified into the following categories: those who never took common entrance examination into secondary schools; those who rejected the offer of admission after passing the common entrance examination and those who dropped out before completion of secondary education. The situation has reached alarming dimensions in parts of Enugu State. It has led to the conversion of many male secondary schools to co-educational schools in a frantic effort to sustain their existence.

Some factors seem to be promoting this poor male enrolment in secondary schools. According to Mallum and Alazi (2005), the main cause of declining male enrolment were inordinate quest to acquire material wealth, which in ordinary parlance is called “the get-rich-quick syndrome”. In a capitalist economy like Nigeria, wealth is adored and recognized in society more than any other quality and the end appears to justify the means. Unemployment seems to be another major cause of decline in male enrolment, as many school leavers continue to roam the streets in search of unavailable jobs. This problem of unemployment is worsened by the irrelevance of the school curriculum in real life situations (ie. non-functional education). Thus, the need to secure employment and set up a steady means of livelihood is a major factor that forces many males to abandon not only secondary education but also other forms of intellectual pursuits (Galadima, 2014).

The low and middle income families can just no longer afford their children’s school fees, textbooks and numerous illegal levies. The situation is not helped by the large size of the average Nigerian family. It has become fashionable for these parents to engage their very young male children in trading and apprenticeships immediately after or even without primary education. Besides, experience has shown that the majority of boys who graduate from secondary schools, whose parents have no capacity for tertiary education still go back to learn various trades and vocations (Uzoma & Aja, 2017).

Public secondary schools are established and managed by the various tiers of government, as against private schools owned by individuals, faith-based and other non- governmental organizations. Nsukka Education Zone is made up of a total of 59 public secondary schools located in various communities within three Local Government Areas as follows: Nsukka: 30, Igbo-Etiti: 15 and Uzo-Uwani: 14. Most of the schools are located in remote, rural communities with hazardous and poor road and river transport infrastructure, and lack of modern social amenities (Ugwoke, 2010).

### **Statement of the Problem**

There is a downward trend in male school enrolment in the South Eastern Nigeria and specifically, Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State. This trend of decreasing male enrolment in secondary schools may be attributed to the recent and excessive value for wealth. This trend has dissuaded young male adolescents from enrolling into schools. They believe that wealth gives one everything in life. Parents and the society at large accord a big recognition to people who have abundant wealth. On the other hand, this gives females the lead in all positions of responsibility and high level manpower. While nothing may be wrong with that, it is a well known fact that females generally tend to shy away from certain academic disciplines like mathematics, the pure sciences and technology. The reason for this may not so much be that these subjects are more difficult to comprehend, but rather, that females generally tend not like to over exert themselves intellectually and physically. This may lead to over production of manpower in the area of the liberal arts and social sciences, at the expense of science and technology. This will further undermine the national objective to produce high level manpower in order to meet the technological needs of the country for sustainable national development.

### **Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of this study was to determine the strategies for enhancing and retaining male enrolment in secondary schools of Nsukka Education zone.

Specifically, the study was designed to determine the extent to which:

1. implementation of a functional curriculum will enhance male enrolment in secondary schools of Nsukka Education zone;
2. implementation of a functional curriculum will retain male enrolment in secondary schools of Nsukka Education zone;
3. Provision of employment opportunities will bring about enhancement of male enrolment in secondary schools of Nsukka Education zone.
4. Provision of employment opportunities will bring about retention of male enrolment in secondary schools of Nsukka Education zone.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent will the implementation of a functional curriculum enhance male enrolment in senior secondary schools?
2. To what extent will implementation of a functional curriculum retain male enrolment in senior secondary schools?
3. To what extent will provision of employment opportunities enhance male enrolment?
4. To what extent will provision of employment opportunities retain male enrolment in senior secondary schools?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study:

- HO<sub>1</sub>:** There will be no significant difference between the mean ratings of senior male students and their parents on the extent the implementation of a functional curriculum will enhance male enrolment in secondary schools.
- HO<sub>2</sub>:** There will be no significant difference between the mean ratings of senior male students and their parents on the extent the implementation of a functional curriculum will retain male enrolment in secondary schools.
- HO<sub>3</sub>:** There will be no significance difference between the mean ratings of senior male students and their parents on the extent the creation of employment opportunities will enhance male enrolment in senior secondary schools.
- HO<sub>4</sub>:** There will be no significance difference between the mean ratings of senior male students and their parents on the extent the creation of employment opportunities will retain male enrolment in senior secondary schools.

### **Methodology:**

Descriptive Survey Research Design was adopted for the study. The School Population for the study consisted of all the male and co-educational Secondary Schools in the zone. Based on statistics from the Planning Research and Statistics (PR&S) Unit of Post Primary School Management Board (PPSMB) Nsukka for the 2016/2017 academic session, there are a total number of 53 male and co-educational Secondary Schools in the zone. The Students' Population for this study was made up of all the senior public secondary school male students in the 3 Local Government Areas that make up Nsukka Education Zone. Based on the 2016/2017 academic session, the population is 17,591. The Parents' population comprised all parents / guardians of Senior Secondary school male students in the zone.

The sample size for the study was 752, comprising 376 male students and 376 parents. The sample size for the students and parents was estimated using Raosoft (2010) Sample Size Calculator. [www.raosoft.com>samplesize](http://www.raosoft.com/sample_size). The same number of parents / guardians of the selected students formed the parents' sample for the study.

The instruments for data collection were two structured questionnaires designed by the researchers the first is titled; Enhancement of Male Enrolment in Secondary Schools (EMESS). As it was designed to achieve the same purpose, the items in the questionnaire were basically the same for students and their parents. The only difference was in their Bio-data. The instrument was divided into two sections: Section 1 for Bio-data information of the respondents and section 2 which contains two Clusters A and B. Cluster A elicited information on the extent to which the implementation of a functional curriculum will enhance male enrolment in secondary schools of Nsukka Education Zone, while cluster B elicited information on the extent to which the provision of employment opportunities will enhance male

enrolment is school. The Response Mode was a 4 point Rating Scale of Very High Extent (VHE) =4, Great Extent (HE) =3, Less Extent (LE) =2 and No Extent (NE) =1.

The second instrument is titled; Retention of Male Enrolment in Secondary Schools (RMESS). As it was designed to achieve the same purpose, the items in the questionnaire were basically the same for students and their parents. The only difference was in their Bio-data. The instrument was divided into two sections: Section 1 for Bio-data information of the respondents and section 2 which contains two Clusters A and B. Cluster A elicited information on the extent to which the implementation of a functional curriculum will retain male enrolment in secondary schools of Nsukka Education Zone, while cluster B elicited information on the extent to which the provision of employment opportunities will retain male enrolment. The Response Mode was a 4 point Rating Scale of Very High Extent (VHE) =4, High Extent (HE) =3, Less Extent (LE) =2 and Very Low Extent (VLE) =1.

The instrument was face validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education University of Nigeria Nsukka: two from the area of Educational Administration and Planning and one from Measurement and Evaluation. Their clarifications and remarks formed the basis for modification of the questionnaire items. The instrument was trial tested on ten senior secondary male students and ten parents from Igbo- Eze South Local Government Area (outside the area of the study), that enabled the researchers generate the data for computing the Internal Consistency Reliability. This was done using Crombach Alpha method, which statistical analysis yielded 0.83 as the overall estimate for the two clusters. This was high enough to consider the instrument reliable for the study. Three research assistants were used by the researchers in data collection. These were instructed on the proper method of filling the questionnaire items. Out of the 752 copies of questionnaires administered on the respondents, 742 copies were completely filled and retrieved. This represents 98.6% return rate. Mean was used for answering the research questions, while t-test statistics was used for testing the null hypotheses.

## Results

**Research Question One:** To what extent will the implementation of a functional curriculum enhance male enrolment in secondary schools?

**Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of the ratings of male students and parents on the extent the implementation of a functional curriculum enhance male enrolment in secondary schools**

Item Statement	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1. Teaching of popularly demanded trades or vocations	Students	376	3.12	.87	HE
	Parents	376	3.20	.45	HE

2. Inclusion of entrepreneurial skills in the senior secondary school curriculum	Students	376	3.13	.90	HE
	Parents	376	3.21	.51	HE
3. Engagement of schools in practical agriculture	Students	376	3.03	.86	HE
	Parents	376	3.15	.43	HE
4. Extensive development of games and sports at this level of education	Students	376	2.80	.89	HE
	Parents	376	2.95	.54	HE
5. Provision of adequately equipped laboratory and workshops	Students	376	2.82	.89	HE
	Parents	376	2.96	.57	HE
6. Adequate provision of instructional materials and resources	Students	376	2.77	.91	HE
	Parents	376	2.88	.62	HE
<b>Cluster Mean</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>2.95</b>	<b>.76</b>	<b>HE</b>
	<b>Parents</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>.37</b>	<b>HE</b>

Table 1 shows the mean ratings of male students and parents on the extent the implementation of a functional curriculum enhance male enrolment in secondary schools. The analysis shows that the mean ratings of both male students and parents to items 1 to 6 are within the mean range of 2.50 to 3.49 implying that both male students and parents agreed that implementation of a functional curriculum to a high extent will enhance male enrolment in secondary schools. The overall mean ratings of 2.95 and 3.06 for the male students and parents respectively imply that parents had higher mean rating than the male students. Also, the overall standard deviations of 0.76 and 0.37 for the male students and parents respectively indicate that the variation in the ratings of the male students to the items was higher than that of the parents.

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male students and parents on the extent the implementation of a functional curriculum enhance male enrolment in secondary schools.

**Table 2: t-test statistic of the difference in the mean ratings of male students and parents on the extent the implementation of a functional curriculum enhance male enrolment in secondary schools**

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-cal	Sig (2-tailed)
Male Students	376	2.95	.76			
Parents	376	3.06	.37	750	-2.552	.011

Table 2 shows that the probability associated with the calculated value of t (-2.552) for the difference in the mean ratings of male students and parents on the extent the implementation of a functional curriculum enhance male enrolment in

secondary schools, is 0.011. Since the probability value of 0.011 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of male students and parents on the extent the implementation of a functional curriculum enhance male enrolment in secondary schools in favour of the parents.

**Research Question Two:** To what extent will the implementation of a functional curriculum retain male enrolment in secondary schools?

**Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of the ratings of male students and parents on the extent the implementation of a functional curriculum retain male enrolment in secondary schools**

Item Statement	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
7. Teaching of popularly demanded trades or vocations	Students	376	2.96	1.26	HE
	Parents	376	2.70	1.25	HE
8. Inclusion of entrepreneurial skills in the senior secondary school curriculum	Students	376	2.73	.99	HE
	Parents	376	2.94	1.10	HE
9. Engagement of schools in practical agriculture	Students	376	2.83	1.03	HE
	Parents	376	2.83	1.11	HE
10. Extensive development of games and sports at this level of education	Students	376	2.92	1.01	HE
	Parents	376	2.87	1.14	HE
11. Provision of adequately equipped laboratory and workshops	Students	376	2.94	.99	HE
	Parents	376	2.87	1.09	HE
12. Adequate provision of instructional materials and resources	Students	376	2.60	1.01	HE
	Parents	376	2.77	1.02	HE
<b>Cluster Mean</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>2.75</b>	<b>1.06</b>	<b>HE</b>
	<b>Parents</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>2.83</b>	<b>1.17</b>	<b>HE</b>

Table 3 shows the mean ratings of male students and parents on the extent the implementation of a functional curriculum retain male enrolment in secondary schools. The analysis shows that the mean ratings of both male students and parents to items 1 to 6 are within the mean range of 2.50 to 3.49 implying that both male students and parents agreed that implementation of a functional curriculum to a high extent will retain male enrolment in secondary schools. The overall mean ratings of 2.75 and 2.83 for the male students and parents respectively imply that parents had higher mean rating than the male students. Also, the overall standard deviations of

1.06 and 1.17 for the male students and parents respectively indicate that the variation in the ratings of the parents to the items was higher than that of the male students.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male students and parents on the extent the implementation of a functional curriculum retain male enrolment in secondary schools.

**Table 4: t-test statistic of the difference in the mean ratings of male students and parents on the extent the implementation of a functional curriculum retain male enrolment in secondary schools**

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t-cal	Sig (2-tailed)
Male Students	376	2.75	1.06			
Parents	376	2.83	1.17	750	-3.754	.002

Table 4 shows that the probability associated with the calculated value of t (-3.754) for the difference in the mean ratings of male students and parents on the extent the implementation of a functional curriculum retain male enrolment in secondary schools, is 0.002. Since the probability value of 0.002 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of male students and parents on the extent the implementation of a functional curriculum retain male enrolment in secondary schools in favour of the parents.

**Research Question Three:** To what extent will the provision of employment opportunities bring about the enhancement of male enrolment in secondary schools?

**Table 5: Mean and standard deviation of the ratings of male students and parents on the extent the provision of employment opportunities bring about the enhancement of male enrolment in secondary schools**

Item Statement	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
13. Provision of middle level jobs for secondary school graduates	Students	376	2.85	1.01	HE
	Parents	376	3.04	.74	HE
14. Extensive establishment of small scale industries	Students	376	2.84	1.01	HE
	Parents	376	3.06	.76	HE
15. Granting of soft loans to school graduates to start commercial ventures	Students	376	3.04	.92	HE
	Parents	376	3.22	.55	HE
16. Helping secondary school	Students	376	3.04	.86	HE

graduates to form co-operative societies	Parents	376	3.19	.46	HE
17. Reactivation of farm settlements	Students	376	2.92	.90	HE
	Parents	376	3.10	.50	HE
<b>Cluster Mean</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>2.94</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>HE</b>
	<b>Parents</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>3.12</b>	<b>.46</b>	<b>HE</b>

Table 3 shows the mean ratings of both male students and parents to items 1 to 6 which boarder on the extent the provision of employment opportunities bring about the enhancement of male enrolment in secondary schools, are within the mean range of 2.50 to 3.49. This means that both male students and parents agreed that provision of employment opportunities bring about the enhancement of male enrolment in secondary schools. The overall mean ratings of 2.94 and 3.12 for the male students and parents respectively imply that parents had higher mean rating than the male students. Also, the overall standard deviations of 0.80 and 0.46 for the male students and parents respectively indicate that the variation in the ratings of the male students to the items was higher than that of the parents.

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male students and parents on the extent the provision of employment opportunities bring about the enhancement of male enrolment in secondary schools.

**Table 6: t-test statistic of the difference in the mean ratings of male students and parents on the extent the provision of employment opportunities bring about the enhancement of male enrolment in secondary schools**

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-cal	Sig (2-tailed)
Male Students	376	2.94	.80			
Parents	376	3.12	.46	750	-3.874	.000

Table 6 shows that the probability associated with the calculated value of t (-3.874) for the difference in the mean ratings of male students and parents on the extent the provision of employment opportunities bring about the enhancement of male enrolment in secondary schools, is 0.000. Since the probability value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected meaning that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of male students and parents on the extent the provision of employment opportunities bring about enhancement of male enrolment in secondary schools in favour of the parents.

**Research Question Four:** To what extent will the provision of employment opportunities bring about the retention of male enrolment in secondary schools?

**Table 7: Mean and standard deviation of the ratings of male students and parents on the extent the provision of employment opportunities bring about the retention of male enrolment in secondary schools**

Item Statement	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
18. Provision of middle level jobs for secondary school graduates	Students	376	2.94	.97	HE
	Parents	376	2.72	1.17	HE
19. Extensive establishment of small scale industries	Students	376	3.34	1.07	HE
	Parents	376	2.57	1.14	HE
20. Granting of soft loans to school graduates to start commercial ventures	Students	376	3.26	1.14	HE
	Parents	376	3.16	1.09	HE
21. Helping secondary school graduates to form co-operative societies	Students	376	3.07	1.16	HE
	Parents	376	3.28	1.21	HE
22. Reactivation of farm settlements	Students	376	3.10	1.14	HE
	Parents	376	2.80	1.20	HE
<b>Cluster Mean</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>3.05</b>	<b>1.10</b>	<b>HE</b>
	<b>Parents</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>3.29</b>	<b>1.17</b>	<b>HE</b>

Table 7 shows the mean ratings of both male students and parents to items 1 to 6 which boarder on the extent the provision of employment opportunities bring about the retention of male enrolment in secondary schools, are within the mean range of 2.50 to 3.49. This means that both male students and parents agreed that the provision of employment opportunities bring about the retention of male enrolment in secondary schools. The overall mean ratings of 3.05 and 3.29 for the male students and parents respectively imply that parents had higher mean rating than the male students. Also, the overall standard deviations of 1.10 and 1.17 for the male students and parents respectively indicate that the variation in the ratings of the parents to the items was higher than that of the male students.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male students and parents on the extent the provision of employment opportunities bring about the retention of male enrolment in secondary schools.

**Table 8: t-test statistic of the difference in the mean ratings of male students and parents on the extent the provision of employment opportunities bring about the retention of male enrolment in secondary schools**

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-cal	Sig (2-tailed)
Male Students	376	3.05	1.10			
Parents	376	3.29	1.17	750	-4.566	.000

Table 8 shows that the probability associated with the calculated value of t (-4.566) for the difference in the mean ratings of male students and parents on the extent the provision of employment opportunities bring about the retention of male enrolment in secondary schools, is 0.000. Since the probability value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected meaning that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of male students and parents on the extent the provision of employment opportunities bring about the retention of male enrolment in secondary schools in favour of the parents.

#### **Discussion of findings:**

It was the opinion of male students and parents of senior secondary schools of Nsukka education zone (Table 1,3,7) that the teaching of popularly demanded trades and vocations, inclusion of entrepreneurial skills in the school curriculum, engagement of schools in practical agriculture, extensive development of games and sports, provision of instructional materials and resources, as well as adequately equipped laboratories and workshops will to a high extent enhance and retain male enrolment in secondary schools. This is evident in the findings of research question one with cluster mean scores of 2.95 and 3.06 for students and parents respectively.

The result is in agreement with the opinions of Osakwe and Osagie,(2010), Talbert,(2012) and Edwin, (2016), who stated that the literary nature of some school subjects and the boring nature of poor teaching strategies often lead to students' inability to cope with the academic rigors, resulting in poor academic performances. Also supporting these findings, Talbert, (2012) went further to state that there are some important life skills in individuals that need to be developed through the study of entrepreneurial skills and vocational training to fight poverty, hunger, health and environmental problems.

The analysis of the hypothesis in table 2 indicated that the probability value of 0.011 is less than the 0.05 level of significance. This means that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of male students and their parents on the extent the implementation of a functional curriculum will increase and retain male enrolment in secondary schools. It is not surprising that the parents showed a stronger conviction than the students, in view of their wealth of experience and maturity.

Students and parents of Nsukka education zone (Table3) indicated that provision of middle level jobs, extensive establishment of small scale Industries, granting of soft loans to school graduates to start commercial ventures, and co-

operative societies; as well as reactivation of farm settlements will to a high extent enhance and retain male enrolment in secondary schools. These findings are supported by the cluster mean scores of 2.94 and 3.12 in Table 3 for students and parents respectively.

This is in line with Uzoma,(2017) who in her research on Secondary School Male Dropouts in Ohaozara Local Government Area, revealed among other things, that the major factors influencing school dropout among male secondary school students, include students disillusionment about schooling; society's recognition and placement of value for rich persons, no matter how they made their riches.

An analysis of the hypothesis in Table 4 and 6 indicated that since the probability value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected; meaning that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of male students and parents on the extent the creation of employment opportunities can bring about a change of attitude by boys towards schooling.

### **Conclusion**

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn: The students and parents of public secondary schools of Nsukka education zone agreed to high extent that implementation of a functional curriculum through the teaching of popularly demanded trades and vocations ,inclusion of entrepreneurial skills in the school curriculum, engagement of schools in practical agriculture, extensive development of games and sports, provision of instructional materials and resources, as well as adequately equipped laboratories and workshops will enhance and retain male enrolment.

The respondents also agreed that creation of employment opportunities to secondary school graduates through reactivation of farm settlements, extensive establishment of small scale industries, as well as granting of soft loans to secondary school leavers to enable them start commercial ventures will to a high extent enhance and retain male enrolment in public secondary schools.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. Adequate and work-equipped science laboratories and technology workshops should be provided in all public secondary schools..
2. Government should set up a guaranteed loan scheme for secondary school leavers to establish small scale commercial ventures.
3. Guidance and counselling units should intensify continuous sensitization / awareness on career areas for secondary school students.
4. Government should introduce a legislation making it compulsory for all youths to finish at least senior secondary school before venturing into business.

5. The secondary school curriculum should contain popularly demanded trades, vocations and entrepreneurial skills and should help students choose the ones that most suit their aptitude, talents and interests.

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