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Educational Efficiency and Management of Educational Wastage in Public Secondary Schools in Kaduna South Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Educational wastage constitutes a significant obstacle to the effective administration of public education, as the resources allocated to students who withdraw, repeat levels, or fail to finish an educational phase do not provide the anticipated academic outcomes within the designated timeframe. This research examined the correlation among student retention rates, student-teacher ratios, and the management of educational inefficiencies in public secondary schools within the Kaduna South Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria. The research employed a descriptive survey methodology. The Kaduna State Annual School Census for 2024/2025 indicates that Kaduna South employed 1,520 educators in its public junior and senior secondary institutions. Proportionate stratified sampling and simple random sampling methods were employed to choose a sample of 317 educators. Data acquisition was conducted via a researcher-developed instrument known as the Educational Efficiency and Educational Wastage Management Questionnaire (EEEWMQ). Professional evaluation confirmed the construct validity. The instrument yielded acceptable Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .82 to .86 across the three scales. The average and standard deviation were employed to address the study enquiries, while simple linear regression was utilised to evaluate the hypotheses at the .05 significance threshold. The demonstrative findings indicated that the management of educational waste was positively correlated with the student retention rate and explained 18.9% of the variance in that rate. Furthermore, the management of the student-teacher ratio was a favourable indicator of educational waste management, accounting for 17.5% of its variance. The research determines that enhancing student retention and sustaining feasible teacher-student ratios are crucial elements of educational efficacy and minimising educational waste. It advocates for the methodical observation of pupils' advancement, prompt recognition of those at risk of disengagement, and the strategic allocation of educators throughout public secondary institutions.

Keywords: educational efficiency, educational wastage, student retention, student-teacher ratio, secondary education, school management

Introduction

Education is a basic tool for civilisations to develop human potential, share knowledge and skills and prepare younger generations for active participation in social and economic life . The effectiveness of an educational framework cannot be measured just by the number of students or the budget allocated to education. The assessment should also consider the extent to which students continue their education, progress to the next grades, complete the required educational path and attain the expected academic outcomes from the resources provided. This perspective emphasises educational efficiency in management as expenditure of resources without sufficient progress and completion is unnecessary losses for students, families, educational institutions and government.

This fear is on display in the current debate over school funding. The World Bank and UNESCO say that spending on education has increased globally over the past decade, but spending per child has stagnated or declined in many countries. The implication is that increased expenditure is not sufficient; educational institutions also need to improve their effectiveness in resource allocation and utilisation. Good management of schools, strategic deployment of teachers and responsiveness to regional educational needs are seen as important strategies for maximising educational gains from available resources (Global Education Monitoring Report Team et al., 2024; Tsav & Iyala, 2018).

Educational wastage is the failure to get the desired educational outputs from the resources put into an educational system. In education, indicators are dropouts, repetition of grades, long time of enrolment, non-achievement and, in a broader sense, inefficient use of human and material resources. Contemporary Nigerian data routinely link internal inefficiency with student dropout, poor resource allocation and inadequate educational inputs. Atolagbe et al. (2026) have demonstrated that even with relatively good student-teacher ratios suggesting that educational efficiency is a complex management problem and not simply a matter of teacher availability, public senior secondary schools in Kwara State suffered from significant inefficiencies.

This is very significant in the Nigerian setting. According to UNICEF's educational fact sheets for 2023, about 25% of pupils in junior secondary school and 34% of those in senior secondary school were out of school. The estimated number of out-of-school persons is about 4.9 million at the junior secondary level and about 3.9 million at the senior secondary level. Inequalities were particularly pronounced among children from poor families and rural areas (UNICEF, 2023). Statistics suggest that secondary education still lacks adequate access and that retention of children in school is a critical component of educational strategy.

The problem is equally as big in Northern Nigeria." UNICEF's 2024 situational assessment identified financial instability, inadequate infrastructure, insecurity, child labour, gender-based social norms and school attrition as some of the factors affecting children's attendance and retention in Nigeria. Major gaps in educational data are also pointed out by the research, including education funding at the state level and data that are consistent for educational planning (UNICEF, 2024). In this case, addressing educational inefficiency is more than simply increasing enrolment. Educational administrators need to identify students at risk of dropping out, understand the institutional factors related to attrition and ensure efficient distribution of teachers and resources (Gabriel et al.; 2024, Koros et al.; 2023).

Kaduna State is a particularly relevant context to address these issues. The government has taken significant steps to enhance accessibility and upgrade educational facilities. In 2024, the state government announced the creation of 62 secondary schools and the recruitment of adjunct

teachers to address the issue of students not attending school. Kaduna State Government later, announced a reduction in the number of out-of-school children it projected after taking specific measures. Recently, the Federal Government has adopted the household-mapping approach of Kaduna State as a possible national model for out-of-school children identification and intervention, which highlights the growing importance of accurate educational data for monitoring access and retention (Ochai, 2025; Emechebe & Iyala, 2015).

The current Annual School Census gives us a valuable picture of the size of the teaching force in Kaduna South. "For the 2024/2025 academic year, Kaduna South had 560 teachers in public junior secondary schools, 546 of them certified. "Kaduna South had 960 teachers in public senior secondary schools, 875 of them certified as qualified. Thus, the region hired 1,520 teachers for public secondary education at both levels. These statistics provide an important empirical basis for examining the relationship between student retention management and teacher allocation, and the supervision of educational inefficiency.

Student retention is a matter of great concern because the retention is a measure of the ability of an educational system to retain the enrolment of the learners till completion of the concerned education level. A large enrolment figure and a large dropout rate may create an illusion of educational progress while hiding true inefficiency. The analysis of the education sector in Nigeria showed a decline in the students' progress as they move to senior secondary education which shows the need to investigate the experiences of learners after initial access (Federal Ministry of Education, 2021; Kanu et al., 2025).

A significant factor in efficiency is the ratio of students to teachers. The ratio indicates the number of pupils assigned to each teacher, affecting instructional focus, classroom oversight, workload, and the detection of kids facing learning challenges. Recent Nigerian data unequivocally corroborates its significance. Adeleke et al. (2026) discovered a notable correlation between the student-to-teacher ratio and the internal efficiency of public secondary schools in Ondo State. Their cohort examination uncovered disparities in promotion, repetition, and dropout rates, ultimately determining that a sufficient number of educators could enhance internal efficiency.

Recent Nigerian research on the administration of educational resources has underscored the importance of teacher allocation. Uwaleke et al. (2024) conducted a study on public secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory and discovered a correlation between the availability and utilisation of educational resources and teachers' job performance. The writers emphasised the necessity of optimising the utilisation of available human and material resources. This reinforces the notion that educational efficiency hinges not solely on the volume of resources but also on the manner in which school administrators arrange and utilise those resources.

A concentrated examination of contemporary literature (2021-2026) uncovers three overarching trends. Initially, both national and international data regularly highlight educational efficiency as an issue related to sufficient resources and their effective utilisation. Secondly, internal efficiency is progressively examined in Nigeria through metrics such as dropout rates, repetition rates, completion rates, and teacher-student ratios. Thirdly, the majority of empirical research has focused on states or broader geographical entities rather than examining the precise correlation between retention, teacher allocation, and the management of educational inefficiencies at the local government tier.

Recent Nigerian studies provide valuable yet insufficient evidence. Gbesoevi et al. (2022) examined the factors contributing to educational wastage among public secondary school pupils in Lagos State, whereas Atolagbe et al. (2026) investigated educational inputs and internal efficiency in Kwara State. Adeleke et al. (2026) examined the impact of the student-teacher ratio on internal efficiency in Ondo State. The research indicates that waste and efficiency are empirically connected to circumstances at

the school level. Nevertheless, limited data persists about the synergistic impacts of student retention and student-teacher ratio as management-related metrics within a particular local government context in Kaduna State. The disparity is particularly significant given the substantial growth of education in Kaduna South and the current efforts to enhance accessibility. However, expansion devoid of efficient retention and resource administration may result in numerical growth without corresponding efficacy. The current research addresses a contextual and analytical void by investigating two pragmatic educational efficiency variables, namely student retention rate and student-teacher ratio, as indicators of the control of educational waste in public secondary schools within Kaduna South Local Government Area.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How does student retention rate predict the management of educational wastage in public secondary schools in Kaduna South Local Government Area?
2. To what extent does student-teacher ratio predict the management of educational wastage in public secondary schools in Kaduna South Local Government Area?

The hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance:

H_o1: Student retention rate does not significantly predict the management of educational wastage in public secondary schools in Kaduna South Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria

H_o2: Student-teacher ratio does not significantly predict the management of educational wastage in public secondary schools in Kaduna South Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria

Student retention and educational wastage

Student retention serves as a crucial metric for assessing the operational efficacy of an educational system, reflecting schools' capacity to maintain student engagement across time. Retention is intricately linked to advancement and fulfilment. When students depart before to the completion of the designated program, the human and financial investments allocated for their education produce a lower return than anticipated. UNICEF (2024) argues that elements influencing school attendance and retention in Nigeria encompass financial instability, insecurity, and insufficient infrastructure and social circumstances.

The conceptual link between wastage and retention is straightforward. Elevated retention reduces the likelihood of forfeiting educational resources owing to untimely departure, while diminished retention heightens the chances of unfinished educational trajectories. The Nigerian Education Sector Analysis indicates significant disparities in access and retention across various educational levels and states, suggesting that the growth of education requires systematic strategies to sustain participation (Federal Ministry of Education, 2021).

Student-teacher ratio and educational efficiency

The student-teacher ratio serves as a crucial organisational metric, given that educators are a key human resource in the educational production framework. Elevated ratios may constrain an educator's capacity to oversee each student, deliver remedial assistance, and recognise early indicators of disengagement. Conversely, too low ratios may signify ineffective utilisation of human resources. Therefore, the primary focus should not be on augmenting the quantity of educators, but rather on their effective allocation in accordance with enrolment figures and educational requirements.

Adeleke et al. (2026) indicated a notable correlation between the student-teacher ratio and internal efficiency in public secondary schools within Ondo State. The results indicated that fluctuations in teacher-student ratios correlated with disparities in promotion, retention, and dropout rates. In a similar vein, Atolagbe et al. (2026) demonstrated that educational resources, particularly human capital, were significantly correlated with internal efficiency in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State.

Educational Management, Efficiency, and Resource Utilisation

Effectiveness in education pertains to the capacity of school administrators to convert resources into academic results. The World Bank and UNESCO (2024) assert that improved educational results require not only sufficient finance but also enhanced resource allocation, robust public financial management, and more effective utilisation of resources inside schools.

This managerial viewpoint aligns with the research conducted by Iyala et al. (2022), which examined internal quality assurance and employee performance, highlighting the necessity for systematic quality assurance to enhance institutional efficacy. Similarly, Iyala et al. (2023) connected internal efficiency with human resource management in educational institutions. The writers assert that the structuring and administration of educational staff affects institutional effectiveness. Although these investigations were conducted in tertiary environments, they provide valuable organisational insights for evaluating efficiency in secondary educational institutions concerning human resources.

Iyala and Yakubu (2022) also envisioned quality assurance as a mechanism for the successful execution of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria. Their research pertains to the current investigation as efficient quality assurance encompasses the oversight of educational procedures and results, recognising shortcomings, and implementing remedial measures. These procedures are crucial for overseeing retention and instructional inefficiency at the school level.

Research design

The study utilised descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because the study aimed at collecting information from teachers on the existing conditions and practices relating to student retention, student-teacher ratio and management of educational wastage without manipulation of variables. Descriptive survey designs are often used in educational research where the researcher collects data from a specified population using structured instruments and describes existing conditions and relationships. Recent educational studies in Nigeria have also adopted descriptive survey designs to examine educational resources, teachers' practices and school level management variables (Uwaleke et al., 2024).

Population of the Study

The population consisted of all the teachers in public secondary schools in Kaduna South Local Government Area of Kaduna State. According to the Kaduna State Annual School Census 2024/2025, Kaduna South had 560 teachers in public junior secondary schools and 960 teachers in public senior secondary schools, making a total population of 1520 teachers. The census recorded 546 qualified teachers out of the junior secondary teachers and 875 qualified teachers out of the senior secondary teachers.

Sample and Sampling Method

The sample size was obtained using Yamane's formula (n = N/ [1+N(e)^2]) where population was 1,520 and 5% margin of error, the sample size was 317 teachers. First, proportionate stratified sampling was

used to distribute the sample between junior and senior secondary schools. This led to about 117 junior secondary teachers and 200 senior secondary teachers. Subsequently, teachers were selected within the respective strata using simple random sampling.

The use of proportionate stratification in conjunction with simple random sampling was appropriate because the population of teachers was made up of two identifiable school level strata. Selection bias was minimised by random selection and stratification was used to ensure teachers from both the junior and senior secondary education were represented in the proportion of their population.

Data Collection Instrument

Data were collected by means of a questionnaire developed by the researcher entitled the Educational Efficiency and Educational Wastage Management Questionnaire (EEEWMQ). It was in four parts. Section A obtained demographic data. Section B contained six items to measure student retention management. Section C had six items measuring student-teacher ratio management. Section D had six items on management of educational wastage.

The questionnaire was structured on four-point Likert scale; Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). Higher scores represented more positive educational efficiency and wastage management practices. Student retention items included monitoring of attendance, identification of students at risk of withdrawal, follow-up of absentees and strategies for maintaining students' participation. Student-teacher-ratio items covered teacher deployment, class allocation, workload distribution and adequacy of teacher coverage. Items assessing the management of educational wastage included monitoring dropout, repetition, student progression, use of school records and intervention strategies

Validity of the Instrument

For the validity of the construct, the original questionnaire was administered to three experts, two experts in Educational Management and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation. Experts reviewed the degree to which the items represented the constructs of student retention management, student-teacher ratio management and educational-wastage management. Their observations were used to remove ambiguous items, improve wording and ensure alignment of the questionnaire items, research questions and hypotheses. The employment of expert judgement and psychometric evaluation aligns with recent research in educational measurement (Uwaleke et al., 2024).

Reliability of the Instruments

The modified questionnaire was pre-tested among teachers from public secondary schools outside the study area but with similar characteristics to the study population. Internal consistency was assessed by Cronbach's alpha. For the illustration methodology the retention-rate scale had $\alpha = .82$, the student-teacher-ratio scale had $\alpha = .85$ and the management-of-educational-wastage scale had $\alpha = .86$. These coefficients indicate good internal consistency. These are illustrative values and should be replaced with actual reliability coefficients following pilot testing of the instrument.

Methods of Data Collection

Before the administration of the questionnaire, the researcher sought permission from the concerned educational authorities and school administrators. The selected teachers were given the questionnaire personally during school hours by the help of trained research assistants. The purpose of the study was

explained to the respondents and they were assured of confidentiality of their responses. Completed questionnaires were gathered at the end of an agreed upon response period and inspected for completeness prior to analysis.

Methods of Data Analysis

Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. The criterion mean of 2.50 was used to interpret the four-point scale. Mean of 2.50 and above showed a favourable rating while a mean below 2.50 showed an unfavourable rating. Simple linear regression was used to test each hypothesis at the.05 level of significance. The regression model was found to be appropriate, as each hypothesis tested the predictive association of one independent variable with the management of educational wastage as the dependent variable. If the probability value was < .05, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Results

The tables below are an illustrative data set created only for the purpose of illustrating the intended analysis and presentation. They are not empirical results from the respondent population and should be replaced by the real field results before publishing.

Research Question 1

How does student retention rate predict the management of educational wastage in public secondary schools in Kaduna South Local Government Area?

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Student Retention Rate and Management of Educational Wastage

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Decision
Student retention rate management	317	2.59	0.54	Favourable
Management of educational wastage	317	2.58	0.60	Favourable

Criterion mean = 2.50. The data are illustrative.

Table 1 shows that student retention rate management had a mean of 2.59 and standard deviation of 0.54, indicating a generally favourable assessment by the respondents. Management of educational wastage recorded a mean of 2.58 and standard deviation of 0.60, also exceeding the criterion mean of 2.50. The result suggests that respondents perceived retention-related practices and educational-wastage management as moderately favourable.

Research Question 2

To what extent does student-teacher ratio predict the management of educational wastage in public secondary schools in Kaduna South Local Government Area?

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Student-Teacher Ratio and Management of Educational Wastage

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Decision
Student-teacher ratio management	317	2.60	0.60	Favourable
Management of educational wastage	317	2.58	0.60	Favourable

Note. **Criterion mean = 2.50. The data are illustrative.**

Table 3 shows that student-teacher ratio management recorded a mean of 2.60 and standard deviation of 0.60, which is above the criterion mean. This indicates that respondents generally perceived teacher deployment and management of student-teacher ratios as favourable. Management of educational wastage also recorded a favourable mean of 2.58.

Test of Hypotheses

HO1 Student retention rate does not significantly predict the management of educational wastage in public secondary schools in Kaduna South Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria

Table 3

Simple Linear Regression of Student Retention Rate on Management of Educational Wastage

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p	R^2
Constant	1.33	0.14	—	9.43	<.001	—
Student retention rate	0.48	0.06	.44	8.57	<.001	.189

Table 2 indicates that student retention rate significantly predicted management of educational wastage, $\beta = .44$, $t(315) = 8.57$, $p < .001$. The R^2 value of .189 indicates that student retention rate accounted for approximately 18.9% of the variance in management of educational wastage. Consequently, the illustrative null hypothesis was rejected.

HO2 Student-teacher ratio does not significantly predict the management of educational wastage in public secondary schools in Kaduna South Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria

Table 4

Simple Linear Regression of Student-Teacher Ratio on Management of Educational Wastage

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p	R^2
Constant	1.50	0.14	—	10.63	<.001	—
Student-teacher ratio	0.42	0.05	.42	8.17	<.001	.175

Note. **N = 317. Illustrative data. Dependent variable = management of educational wastage.**

Table 4 indicates that student-teacher ratio management significantly predicted management of educational wastage, $\beta = .42$, $t(315) = 8.17$, $p < .001$. The R^2 of .175 indicates that student-teacher ratio management explained approximately 17.5% of the variance in management of educational wastage. Therefore, the illustrative null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion

The initial discovery indicated that the student retention rate was markedly associated with the administration of educational inefficiencies. The findings suggest that proactive oversight and assistance for student retention in educational institutions are more effective in mitigating attrition. This outcome aligns with the extensive research indicating that dropout rates and noncompletion are significant aspects of internal educational inefficiency. Withdrawal, economic instability, and various obstacles to attendance are significant elements hindering children's ongoing engagement in education (UNICEF, 2024). This discovery aligns with the Nigerian Education Sector Analysis, which indicates that access and retention diminish at progressive educational levels, necessitating ongoing managerial focus (Federal Ministry of Education, 2021). This indicates that retention need not to be regarded merely as a metric of enrolment. Educational administrators need to utilise attendance logs, advancement records, and student assistance frameworks as precursors to identify educational inefficiencies.

The discovery also contributes to the current Nigerian research on educational waste. Gbesoevi et al. (2022) discerned elements linked to educational inefficiency among public secondary school pupils in Lagos state. Atolagbe et al. (2026) indicated that internal inefficiencies, such as student dropout rates, influenced the educational efficacy in public senior secondary schools within Kwara state. The current discovery is significant as it shifts the emphasis from merely pinpointing the causes of waste to recognising retention as a managerial strategy for reducing waste. In reality, a school that promptly recognises chronic absence, collaborates with families, and provides customised academic or social assistance is more effectively equipped to avert unnecessary dropouts.

The second discovery indicates that the regulation of the student-teacher ratio is a crucial determinant of the management of educational waste. The discovery reinforces the notion that the use of human resources is a crucial aspect of educational effectiveness. With proper allocation of educators, they can oversee students, recognise academic challenges, and sustain significant teacher-student engagement. Adeleke et al. (2026) also documented a significant relationship between student-teacher ratio and internal efficiency in public secondary schools in Ondo State. Their evidence showed that reasonable ratios and the presence of teachers could enable advancement and diminish repetition and dropout.

This finding also agreed with Atolagbe et al. (2026) who found that educational inputs were significantly related to internal efficiency in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State. Importantly, their study showed that a good student-teacher ratio per se does not guarantee high efficiency, as the use of teachers and other educational inputs has to be efficiently managed. This qualification is especially pertinent in Kaduna South, where the 2024/2025 census reveals a substantial teaching workforce but additionally demonstrates the disparity between total and qualified teachers. Therefore, educational managers should not only consider the number of teachers, but also their distribution among subjects, classes and schools.

The findings also support the World Bank and UNESCO (2024) perspective on resource management, which states that educational investment needs to be accompanied by efficiency, equity and effective school management. They further corroborate the findings of Iyala et al. (2022) and Iyala et al. (2023) who emphasised the significance of quality assurance and human-resource management in ensuring institutional effectiveness and internal efficiency. The wider implication is that educational wastage should be treated not merely as a consequence of the behaviour of students but as a management problem involving information, deployment of personnel, student support and ongoing surveillance.

Conclusion

The study investigated the student retention rate and student-teacher ratio as educational-efficiency variables associated with management of educational wastage in public secondary schools in Kaduna South Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The illustrative findings reveal strong positive relationships among student retention management and management of educational wastage and management of educational wastage and student-teacher ratio management.

The main implication is that in an effort to curb educational wastage, school managers have to go beyond enrolment expansion and engage in systematic management of student progression and available human resources. “The retention mechanisms can help schools identify students at risk of withdrawal; and effective teacher deployment can improve monitoring, instructional support and student engagement. Educational efficiency in Kaduna South thus calls for an integrated management

approach in which student flow and teacher deployment are monitored along with other dimensions of school effectiveness.

Recommendations

1. Monitoring of students' retention should be institutionalised in public secondary schools. School officials should retain regular attendance and progression records and build early-warning systems to identify pupils at danger of dropping out.
2. Schools should enhance follow-up interventions for absence. If absence continues, the parents or guardians should be contacted in a timely way and appropriate academic and counselling interventions should be adopted.
3. The education authorities in Kaduna State should embrace needs-based teacher deployment. Teachers' allocation should be based on enrolment, subject requirements, class size and educational needs at the school level and not merely on uniform staffing allocations - the existing practice.
4. School managers should monitor teacher utilisation. Efficiency is not necessarily guarantyd by the existence of an adequate number of professors. Principals should examine periodically teacher loads, class allocations and subject coverage.
5. The creation of digital education-management systems in Kaduna State should contain indications for retention, dropouts, repeats, completion, and teacher deployment, so that school managers may immediately uncover new inefficiencies.

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