

The ‘Clogs in The Wheel’ of Development of school Administration in Nigeria

Victor Olugbenga AYOKO

Abstract

This paper discussed the ‘clogs in the wheel’ of progress faced by school administration and development at all levels of education in both private and public schools in Nigeria. The interpretive research approach was used by holistically and historically employing Secondary data from prints and online sources to support the points mentioned in the paper. The challenges working against the smooth development and administration of schools in Nigeria are much. Some of which include problem of special needs and inclusive education, inadequate local and foreign collaboration, lack of proper autonomy, natural and man-made disaster, poor public library services and bad reading culture among others. The study identified that these problems are not peculiar to Nigeria alone but most developed and developing countries face similar challenges. The finding from this research is that these problems are jointly caused by all stakeholders contrary to the general belief that they are caused by bad governance. To solve these problems, the paper suggested: Policymakers should make Nigerian education marketable to attract foreign revenue, brain gain, global competence, improved ranking, and collaborations by improving the standard of the Nigerian educational system in line with global best practices and expectations, to deter fake results, academic institutions and employers of labor should scrutinize security symbols and seals of academic institutions, Our libraries should be up to date and upgraded to electronic and digital open versions for easy access to information, Examination regulatory agencies and school administrators must synergies to curb examination malpractice in our school system

Key Words: Administration, Clog in the Wheel, Education, Development, School

Introduction

The challenges faced by the education sectors in Nigeria have made Nigerian education less marketable in the globally market. These challenges have placed Nigeria in a bad position and ranking in line with global standard. Though, these problems are not peculiar to Nigeria alone, but to other developing and developed countries.

As opined by Agobue & Anyaeji (2021), for a man to meet up with the process of social life especially in this knowledge economy, education is a vital prerequisite.

“To compete globally, the education of the citizen starting from the primary school level to the tertiary level must be the priority of any government. Education is a major criterion used to evaluate the growth and development of any nation because the easiest way to destroy a nation is to kill the education sector”

Victor Olugbenga AYOKO, Faculty of Education, National Open University of Nigeria

The Nigerian Education sector is facing challenges that emanate from the digital transformation in technological advancement, knowledge economy, globalization and internationalization complex cultural and religious issues, man-made and natural disaster, and political practises

The retardation trend in the education sector caused from poor budgetary allocation to education in past 10 years had forced Nigerian lecturers to seek for greener pasture in developed countries while Nigerian students also seek quality education outside the country due to poor governance and bad public image of the poorly ranked education in Nigeria. This paper looked into these challenges, the causes and made suggestions on the way forward.

Research Methodology

This review of literature looks at issues holistically and historically in line with interpretive research paradigm. Data collected from secondary sources from online journals and print media were arranged into themes, and analyzed for relevant contents especially on issues militating against the progress of education sector in Nigeria.

Concept of Challenges

The corner stone for a viable economic growth and development in Nigeria and other developing countries is quality Education.

Administration is a process of developing resources to achieve set goals and objectives in an organization. The problems militating against the, administration, and development of education in Nigeria are multiple-faceted and overwhelming.

A challenge can be simply defined as an unfavorable condition or situation that required urgent call for action. Challenges vary in scope and complexity ranging from simple to complex one (Ronald, 2018).

It is therefore important to understanding the structure of the challenging situation by identifying the simplicity or complexity to enable people to be able to channel a way forward in order to overcome the challenges

The problem is the challenging issue or unfavorable situation; The process is the methodology, steps or procedure that will be employed to solve the problem or complete the task; The product is the solution, recommendations, suggestions or way forward in solving the problem; The criteria are the yardsticks, guidelines, benchmarks, and standards for assessing the success or failure of educational interventions or programmes

Challenges of Effective Administration of Schools

(1) Inadequate Local and Foreign Academic Collaborations

Academic collaboration is a formal relationship of an academic nature entered into for academic excellence and development. Such areas of expected collaborations include joint research especially comparative research, joint degree programs, joint institutes or centers, and so on. Collaborations can be locally between two faculty members, between two institutions, and internationally between institutions from different

countries. This leads to a cross breed of ideas and leveraging on the resources of parties involved. Presently, the level of collaborations among educational institutions within and without Nigeria is nothing to write home about due to the associated problems.

The problems associated with this wonderful and developmental concept are personality clash, unhealthy competition, lack of information and experience, lack of technological know-how, resistance to change, cultural mismatch, and administrative bottleneck between collaborating institutions.

(2) Lack of Proper Autonomy in Higher Institutions

Akinwumi & Olaniyan (2001) defined university autonomy as the “freedom to teach and examine students undisturbed, freedom on what to teach and how to teach it, freedom of research and freedom to select students”.

The results of truncating the university’s autonomy are serious. These include: poor academic outcomes and weak teaching strength. The impact of political interference on academics can be overbearing and can tell on the long-term development of an academic institution. “The implication of university education politicization has contributed to the falling standard of university education, poor management, poor international rating, under-development, corruptions and strike actions”.

(3) Natural and Man-Made Disasters

According to Blessing (2014), one of the most pressing challenges facing the provision of quality education in Nigeria is climate change with its associated hazards. Offorma (2010) defined climate change as a continuous, rapid, and prolonged alteration of climate in one direction which reflects changes in the variability or average state of the atmosphere over time scales, ranging from decades to millions of years.

The findings of a study carried out by Blessing, (2014) revealed several implications for quality education in the Nigerian educational system. The study highlights the issue of lateness, absenteeism, school drop-out, destruction of school buildings and learning materials, incompleteness of curriculum content as well as the closure of schools due to climate change-related problems. She opined that all of these could increase the illiteracy level of the country and consequently jeopardize the government’s efforts toward meeting Millennium Development Goals.

A pandemic according to Ayoko (2022) “is an epidemic of an infectious disease that had spread across a large region like a state, country, continent, multiple continents or world-wide. When a disease spread is exponential, it becomes a threat to livelihood and the social and economic effects usually lead to students dropping out of school. The recent covid-19 pandemic contributed to an increase in the rate of school dropout especially in the third-world countries. This is due to the lockdown protocol adopted as safety strategy, schools, social and business activities were put on hold for months and this adversely affected the socio-economic condition of the masses. The financial pressure due to the lockdown aggravated the rate of school dropout. The effects of any form of pandemic results into circumstances that are beyond the school, students and even the government and this may lead to dropout in school by vulnerable students”

(4) Problem of Special Needs and Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is based on the principle that all children should learn together, regardless of disability, socio-economic background, cultural, religious or age difference. As penned by Obi (2007), there seem to

be a great discrepancy between theory and practice in the provision of educational services to children with special needs in Nigeria. Most of the children with disabilities in schools are there courtesy of Charitable Organizations and individuals. The challenges facing the implementing of inclusive education in Nigeria are due to our orientation and disposition towards special needs children. The myth surrounding the birth of a special needs child sometimes causes negative attitudes from parents and pupils that are not disabled.

(5) Poor Public Library Services and Bad Reading Culture

Kiyosoki (1997), the author of 'Rich Dad, Poor Dad,' once said that "If you want your intelligence to grow, go to a library, a bookshop or a school". He further opined that, "to be effectively competing as part of the global economy, we must become an intelligent society and to become that, we must be a people that read". Ambrose (2014) documented that a reading nation is an informed nation. But Nigeria cannot be regarded as a reading nation because the younger generation of Nigerians does not consider reading a leisure activity. The poor reading habits of these younger Nigerians affect their performances at school and during examinations. It has been proved that children/students with poor reading habits do engage in anti-social behaviors such as school violence, bullying, and examination malpractice.

(6) School Dropout and Out-of-School Syndrome

The rate of school dropout especially after junior secondary education is becoming alarming in Nigeria. Nigerian out-of-school children figure has oscillated between 10.5 million and around 15 million for more than a decade, with the situation growing worse due to the degenerating security situation in the country. Out-of-school children are the children whom the government and the parents have failed to provide quality basic education for. The term "out-of school children" is a non-attendance of the school of school-age children for some established factors.

There are many factors responsible for out-of-school children in Nigeria. Some of the factors include; poor funding of education, corruption, poor implementation of Child Rights law, insecurity problems, Lack of political will to address the problems, high rate of poverty, and high fertility rate. The social implications of out-of-school children include security challenges, shortage of skilled manpower in future, bad international image, high levels of illiteracy and high socio-economic and dependency issues. (Ogunode, Adanna & Ayoko, 2023)

According to Jordan et al. (1994), school dropout can be linked to two different factors. These are adverse situations within the school environment and factors within the individual student. However, Watt & Roessingh (1994) introduced a third reason known as 'falling out of school'. This happens in a condition that the concerned student does not show improvement or progress in school work and eventually becomes apathetic or even disillusioned with school completion. This is usually a 'side effect' of insufficient personal and educational supports from parent, society and government.

(7) Low University Admission Capacity and Accessibility Problem

The demands for higher education have become very high and competitive because of the benefits and socio-economic gains. Akubailo & Okorie (2013) argued that while an increase in the number of educational institutions may address the issue of access but other factors such as shortage of teaching staff, research grants, infrastructure, corruption, quality, and weak technology are even more serious challenges. Agboola

& Ofoegbu (2010) noted that access to university education in Nigeria when compared with the number of qualified applicants is low, as a result, the gap between successful or qualified candidates and those admitted has continued to widen every year.

(8) Poor Parenting / Guidance

Poor parenting has resulted in a high level of immoral behavior among students and this posed a serious challenge to the school and society as a whole. Afuye (2015), reported the forms of moral decadence as; cultism, Rape, examination malpractice, Teenage pregnancy, student prostitution, sexual harassment, sale of “Grade” students’ demonstrations, drug abuse, indecent dressing, and so on.

(9) Drugs and Substance Abuse

According to Dankano & Garba (2017), the substance abuse problem in Nigeria is not different from other countries though there may be variations in the magnitude of the problem. Similarly, students and youth found in the acts of drug abuse are often academically and socially less developed as they are not respected and recognized to make a reasonable contribution to any development. This is because drug abuse does not only downgrade the academic performance of students but also affects the moral, physical and general buildup of the students (Kandel & Chen, 1995). Morally, students are otherwise disobedient to their teachers, parents, and their senior students both at school and home as a result of drug influence.

(10) Examination Malpractices

Citing Onyibe et al. (2015) the Examination Malpractice Act (1999) explains examination malpractice as any act of omission or commission by a person who in anticipation of, before, during, or after any examination fraudulently secures any unfair advantage for himself or any other person in such a manner that contravenes the rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity, reliability, authenticity of the examination and ultimately the integrity of the certificates issued. The rate and manner it is perpetrated nowadays call for serious concern. The rate of this crime has become so widespread that there is virtually no examination anywhere at all levels and outside the formal school system that there is no one form of illegal practice or another, (Ojonemi et al., 2013).

(11) Cultism

Cultism can be defined as a ritual practice by a group of people whose membership, admission, policy, and initiation formalities as well as their mode of operations are done in secret and kept secret with their activities having negative effects on both members and non-members alike (Ajayi, 2015). The adverse effects of cultism in educational institutions especially in secondary schools level have continued to be a source of worry to governments. The menace and aggressiveness of cult members and cult-related activities is the most embarrassing problem facing tertiary institutions as this has resulted in escalated crime rates in the various institutions of learning today.

(12) Poor Ranking of Nigerian University

Ati (2017) attributes poor ranking to low visibility on the web and the inactivity of scholars and researchers to contribute meaningfully to the world of knowledge. In most cases, the institutional framework for effective activity is deficient and most research information does not go beyond the four walls of the institution. Low

(webo-metrics) ranking could lead to a lowering of the esteem of the staff in the eyes of stakeholders, especially potential students and funding authorities. Maybe only a handful of parents would whole-heartedly send their children to institutions with low rank (Anyira & Idubor, 2020)

(13) Offering of Unaccredited Courses

Some Nigerian private and public universities are poorly resourced. This explains the rising number of academic programs that are losing accreditation. Parents and concerned authorities who desire graduates with an acceptable level of competency in their areas of specialization are very worried about this development. (Eno-Abasi & Atueyi, 2016)

Admission of students into courses and academic programs that are not accredited by the Nigerian university commission is among many admission scams that have been reported in Nigeria. One of the major risks of pursuing an unaccredited degree is that it affects the chances of employment opportunities because many employers will not hire a potential job candidate if the degree they hold was granted by a learning institution that is not recognized. Unaccredited institutions usually do not have the same educational standards and policies as accredited institutions and employers are likely to want to feel confident by hiring someone with an accredited degree from an institution that is recognized.

(14) Admission Racketing

Admission racketeering can be defined as an illegal process that comes up when admission seekers pay money to a certain set of people to gain admission into any level of education. It is a “money-for-admission” process in the school system. This process is now rampant in our tertiary institutions, secondary schools, and even in some primary schools. The government, parents, lecturers, school administrators, and students are all major causative factors in this disgraceful act. This act has not only degraded our education system but, it has also affected the Nigerian economy and national development at large.

(15) Problem of Internalization of Nigerian Education

Internationalization is a process of change that is tailored to meet the individual needs, the interests of each higher education entity, and the development of the country as a whole.

The advantage of education internationalization includes improved academic quality, internationally exposed students and staff, academic collaborations, and national and international citizenship for students and staff from underdeveloped countries. Revenue generation and brain gain are potential benefits for developed countries. Higher education internationalization has been described as the process by which higher education institutions compete for students globally as well as the processes by which they attempt to prepare students for a globalized world. Nigerian higher institutions especially universities are struggling with an international outlook.

“The Nigerian higher education lacks policies that spelt out how foreign lecturers will be attracted to work in their various institutions. There is no specific policy to encourage international students and lecturers to come and study / work in the country. Many countries like South Africa, Malaysia, UK, USA, India etc have policies to attract international students and lecturers. The lack of this internationalization policy is another reason for low employment of foreign lecturers in the Nigerian higher institutions especially the universities”. (Ogunode, Ayoko & Okechukwu, 2022)

(16) Inadequate Scholarship / Bursary for local and Foreign Studies

Inadequacy of federal and state government scholarship and bursary award schemes is a major problem affecting educational funding in Nigeria. There is a gross lack of transparency in the administration and award of these scholarships and bursaries in most states of the federation. Often time, the awards are not done on merits but mam-know-man. Brilliant but indigent students are denied these opportunities instead such opportunities are given to children of rich men, politicians, and cronies.

(17) Unwillingness to Study Education as a Course

Teacher training institutions are bedeviled by low-quality candidates because most students do not want to study Education as a course but decided to do so reluctantly due to a lack of interest and motivation to become a teacher. This results in poor quality education graduates. Teacher education is seen as the last option when students fail to secure admission into their course of choice. This leads to a lack of commitments, poor performances, and eventually poor quality graduates.

Conclusion and Findings

The problems facing school administration in Nigeria have become a 'clog in the wheel' of development in the education sector at all levels. These challenges if not quickly looked into will reduce the marketability of Nigerian education in the global domain because products of such education may not be able to meet up with the globally acceptability. There is need for behavioral modifications in tandem with the global best practices through Mass orientation of the citizens.

Effective leadership style is paramount to the realization of the goals and objectives of the school system as enshrined in the national policy on education. Unfortunately, both the internal and external administration of schools at all levels is infected with various problems. These hydra-headed problems are artificial and can be curbed through a reorientation, public-private partnership, dialogue, collaborative policy formulations and implementation, mutual community development services, innovative research, reformations, war against indiscipline and transformations.

Real transformation in the quality and standard of education delivery will be possible when an experienced, selfless and visionary person that understands the importance of investment in education becomes the leader. As decision-makers, policymakers, and stakeholders, the ball is in our court.

Suggestions

The followings are suggested based on the varied challenges militating against the effective school administration and developments in Nigeria

- (1) Examination regulatory agencies and school administrators must synergies to curb examination malpractice in our school system
- (2) Policymakers should make Nigerian education marketable to attract foreign revenue, brain gain, global competence, improved ranking, and collaborations by improving the standard of the Nigerian educational system in line with global best practices and expectations

(3) To deter fake results, academic institutions and employers of labor should scrutinize security symbols and seals of academic institutions. They should also contact issuing schools to verify the authenticity of certificates presented to them. The Electronic Transcript Exchange (ETX-NG) and certificate verification system for Nigeria may be useful in this regard.

(4) Our libraries should be up to date and upgraded to electronic and digital open versions for easy access to information. In addition, the government should encourage local writers and publishers by making available special funds or subsidies so that local content can be included and promoted and adequate ICT infrastructure (hardware, software, internet connectivity, and alternative power source) should be made available by management for effective utilization of web services by staff. This can be achieved through Formulation and implementation of a good web Policy, Improving the Institution's Web Visibility, Increasing the Size of the web content, Uploading documents in rich Files Formats, and Improving Scholarly research

References

- Afuye, A. (2015) Moral Decadence in Tertiary Institution. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 6 (13) 234-245
- Agboola, B. M., & Ofoegbu, F. I. (2010) Access to university education in Nigeria: A review Working paper, Department of Educational Studies and Management, University of Benin.
- Ajayi, T & Oni, J. (2015). *A Functional Approach to School Organization and Management*. Ijebu- Ode: Triumph Book Publishers.
- Akinwumi, F.S & Olaniyan, D.A (2001) analysis of university autonomy in Nigeria, *African Journal of educational management*, 9 (2), 117-128
- Akubuilu, F, & Okorie, E. U. (2013) Sustainability of tertiary education through quality assurance and development in Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 4 (15), 140-144
- Ambrose, I.S (2014) National Library and Its Challenges, *People Daily*, October 20, 2014
- Anyira, I.E. & Idubor, I (2020) Poor Webometrics Ranking of Nigerian Higher Institutions: Causes, Implications, and Solutions. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 4200. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/4200>
- Ati, O.F. (2017). Low Webometrics Ranking of African Universities: Causes, Consequences and Cure. *International Journal of Development Strategies in Humanities, Management, and Social Sciences*, 7 (3), 74-80
- Ayoko, V.O (2022) Understanding the 'Falling-Out' Factors that Contribute to School Dropout and the Way Forward: Analysis of Government Failures, Cultural Beliefs, Disasters, Pandemic and Forced Migration, proceeding of Paper Presented at International Conference on Modern Education Studies: "Don't Drop Me Out of School", June 25th to 27th, Konya-Turkey, 46-56.
- Blessing, A.M (2014) Challenges of Climate Change On provision of and accessibility of quality education in Nigeria. *International journal of education learning and development*, 2 (4), 26-32
- Dankano, E. & Garba, M.J (2017), Drugs abuse and its effects on academic performance of secondary school students in Bali local government. *Taraba state university Journal of sociology*, 2 (2)
- Eno-Abasi, S & Ujunwa, A (2016) Rising number of unaccredited courses, a metaphor for Ailing varsity system. *The guardian*, 18th August
- Jordan, W. J, Lara, J., & McPartland, J. M (1996) Exploring the causes of early dropout among race, ethnic and gender groups. *Youth & Society*, 28, 62-94.
- Kandel, U. D. & Chen, W (1995) Drug addiction among Police Secondary School Students. Paper Presented at the Bi-annual conference of the force education officers and the first Nigerian training course for NGO's in the treatment of Drug Dependent Persons in Benin City, Nigeria, 1 - 20
- Kiyosoki, R (1997) Rich Dad, Poor Dad.
- Obi, F.B (2007) Institutionalization, Mainstreaming or Inclusion: Challenges for Special Education in Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 3(2), 267-273

- Offorma, G.C. (2010). Climate change and the need for new curriculum development in Nigerian universities. *Nigerian Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 17(3), 265-270.
- Ojonemi, P. S., Enejoh, W., Enejoh, A., & Olatunmibi, O. (2013). Examination Malpractice: Challenges to Human Resource Development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Capacity Building in Education and Management*, 2(1), 91 – 101
- Ogunode, N.J, Ayoko, V.O, Okechukwu, E.V (2022) Analysis of Factors Responsible for Poor Patronage of Public Higher Institutions in Nigeria by Competent Foreign Academics. *International Journal on Integrated Education*, 5(6), 176-184
- Ogunode, N.J Adanna, C.M & Ayoko, V.O (2023) Out of School Children in Nigeria. Causes, Social Implications and Ways Forward. *International Journal on Integrated Education*, 5(12), 82-91
- Onyibe, C.O, Uma, U.U, & Ibina, E (2015) Examination Malpractice in Nigeria: Causes and Effects on National Development. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6 (26). 12-19
- Robert, T.K & Sharon, L.L (1997) *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*. Warner Books Ltd
- Ronald, (2018) *Harvard Business Review*, 8(5), 156-177.
- Watt, D, & Rossingh, H (1994) Some You Win, Most You Lose: Tracking Early dropout in High School (1988-1993). *English Quarterly*, 26, 5-7