

EDUCATION IN AFRICA: ACHIEVEMENT, CHALLENGES AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY

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Abstract

This paper provides a critical examination of African educational systems, exploring its nature, strengths, weaknesses, and impact on global development. Being the most populous country in Africa, most populous black nation in the world and one with the largest market in West Africa, Nigeria is used as representative case study for the paper. The paper discusses the challenges facing the Nigerian educational system, including inadequate funding, policy summersaults, security concerns, and tensions along tribal and religious lines. Despite these challenges, Nigerian students have excelled in various fields of study both in Nigeria and abroad, contributing significantly to research, innovation, and global movements for change. The paper examines the successes of Nigerian students in the diaspora, highlighting their contributions to science and technology, entrepreneurship, leadership, arts and culture, sports, social justice, academic excellence, and cultural diplomacy. The paper also explores the tensions in the Nigerian educational system, including religious and tribal undercurrents, which have led to conflicts and crises. The ethical dilemmas facing the Nigerian educational system are also examined, including issues related to corruption, academic fraud, and the exploitation of students. Finally, the paper recommends solutions to improve the Nigerian educational system and enhance its contribution to global development. The recommendations include increasing funding, prioritizing teacher training, improving curriculum development, addressing security concerns, and reducing policy summersaults. By addressing the challenges facing the Nigerian educational system and implementing the recommended solutions, Nigeria (Africa) can continue to make significant contributions to the global community and drive national development.

Keywords: Education, Challenges, Achievements, Global community

Introduction

From time immemorial, the importance of education to any nation cannot be over emphasized. It is in recognition of this importance that the international community and governments all over the world have made commitments for citizens to have access to education. Contemporarily, there have been quite a number of international human rights instruments that provide for education as a fundamental human right to all. Some of these instruments include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) (Saul et al 2014) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) (Hazarika 2010). Thus, education is now seen as a human right that should be ensured for all human beings, not just for the sake of it, but for the continuous functioning and evolution of mankind.

On the strengths of this, education is largely becoming a global affair as the world continuously gravitates into a globe with little or no boundaries. Thereby making the educational sector a global community, and a formation ground for global human capital. The pool of professionals is no longer confined by geographical location, but have become a class that defies geographical boundary. The continuous growth in environmental and social problems, insatiable thirst for science and technological inventions, and the need for mitigation against resultant challenges, have brought about a skyrocketing demand for professionals around the world. The sourcing of competent and capable hands today, are sourced from far and wide regardless of geographical limitations. And if any nation must have a pride of place amongst the comity of nations, she must be able to hone human capital that is utilizable by global demands or one that can contribute meaningfully to the solutions of global problems. The conventional indices to measure educational institutions around the world have been based on factors such as institutional frameworks, financing, students-teacher ratios etc. However, factors such as global contribution have been less emphasized. For a race like Africa that has been accused of contributing little or nothing to human development/evolution (Hegel), there is a need to reevaluate such beliefs (especially in the light of contemporary world).

Nigeria, being the most populous black nation, and one with marked potentials for honing some of the world's most treasured mineral resources (Akin 2017), stands a chance to be representative sample for Africa in the discourse of educational development, and contribution to global development. This paper, from the bird eye of Nigeria's educational landscape shall attempt to investigate the nature, strengths, weaknesses and contribution of Africa's education to the global community.

Statement of the Problem

The educational landscape in Nigeria faces numerous challenges, including educational crises, policy changes, gender disparities, tribal undercurrents, ethical dilemmas, and the

need to match such miasma with the global contributions of Nigerian intellectuals is the focus of this paper. This paper attempts a re-evaluation of the Nigerian educational context from the stand point of how much her students and intellectuals have contributed to the world. This study attempts to leap beyond the conventional evaluation of the Nigerian educational contexts on the basis of corruption, infrastructural decay, financing etc. instead, this study evaluates the Nigerian educational contexts on the basis of how much she has contributed to global knowledge and human evolution (development).

Literature review

Education is a fundamental driver of individual and societal development, playing a crucial role in shaping the future of nations. In Africa, education has been a focus of research and policy efforts to improve human capital and foster economic growth. This section provides an extensive overview of empirical studies that have examined the achievement, challenges, and contribution of education in Africa to the global community. The studies discussed highlight key findings and provide academic citations to support the arguments presented. Empirical studies have examined various aspects of education achievement in Africa, including literacy rates, enrollment rates, and learning outcomes. For instance, a study by UNESCO (2019) explored the progress in education achievement in Africa. The findings indicated that while significant improvements have been made in terms of enrollment rates and gender parity in education, challenges remain in achieving quality education and improving learning outcomes. The study emphasized the importance of addressing issues related to teacher quality, curriculum relevance, and educational infrastructure to enhance education achievement in Africa.

Moreover, a study by World Bank (2018) investigated learning outcomes in primary education across several African countries. The findings revealed that a considerable number of students in Africa lack basic literacy and numeracy skills, indicating the need for targeted interventions to improve learning outcomes. The study emphasized the importance of effective teaching methods, quality instructional materials, and supportive learning environments in enhancing education achievement.

Empirical research has also identified several challenges that hinder education progress in Africa, including limited access, inadequate resources, and socio-economic disparities. A study by Oketch and Rolleston (2007) examined the challenges of education in sub-Saharan Africa. The research highlighted issues such as limited access to education, especially for marginalized populations, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient funding. The study called for increased investment in education, targeted interventions to address inequalities, and policy reforms to overcome these challenges.

Furthermore, a study by Chinyoka and Snow (2019) explored the challenges faced by African higher education institutions. The findings indicated issues such as brain drain,

limited research capacity, and the need for curriculum relevance to address the socio-economic challenges of the continent. The study emphasized the importance of strengthening institutional capacity, fostering research and innovation, and promoting collaboration between academia and industry to overcome these challenges. Studies have also examined the contribution of African education to the global community, including knowledge production, innovation, and global workforce.

A study by Wamala (2019) investigated the contribution of African universities to knowledge production and research. The findings revealed that African universities are making significant contributions to research and knowledge dissemination, addressing local challenges, and providing solutions with global relevance. The study emphasized the importance of supporting research capacity and collaboration to enhance the contribution of African education to the global community.

Moreover, a study by Kaba and Kaba (2020) explored the role of African diaspora graduates in the global workforce. The research highlighted the positive impact of education obtained in Africa on the careers and contributions of African diaspora graduates globally. The study emphasized the need to strengthen the links between African education systems and the global diaspora, promoting knowledge transfer, investment, and collaboration for mutual benefit.

From the above, it is evident that several scholars lament the state of education in Nigerian sphere (despite certain achievements). This paper will however attempt to make a critical investigation of the problems that bedevil the Nigerian society and also explore some of the ways that Nigerian (African products) has contributed to the global sphere.

Methodology

Qualitative research design will be employed to explore and understand the educational crises, policy changes, girl child education, tribal undercurrents, ethical dilemmas, educational interventions, successes of Nigerian students in the diaspora, and their contributions to the global community.

The study will utilize documentary research as the primary method for data collection. It involves analyzing existing documents, reports, academic articles, news sources, government publications, and other relevant sources to gather information.

Documentary research: The researcher will collect a wide range of documents related to the educational system in Nigeria, educational policies, reports on girl child education, case studies, academic articles, news articles, and other relevant sources. The documents will be gathered from reputable sources, including governmental and non-governmental organizations (especially the ministry of education), research institutions, academic

databases, online archives, and media platforms. The researcher will critically analyze and review the collected documents to extract relevant information pertaining to the research objectives.

Data Analysis: The collected data will be subjected to qualitative analysis techniques, including thematic analysis and content analysis. The researcher will identify and categorize themes and patterns within the data, focusing on the educational crises, policy changes, challenges in girl child education, tribal undercurrents, ethical dilemmas, educational interventions, successes of Nigerian students in the diaspora, and their contributions to the global community. Also, the researcher will examine the content of the documents, looking for key concepts, arguments, and evidence related to the research topics. This analysis will help in identifying trends, disparities, and factors influencing the educational system in Nigeria.

The Nigerian Educational Scene (Nature and Challenges): A Critical Overview

Although literatures that directly attend to the title of this study are scanty, there are however ample vistas of empirical repository on the sub-concepts and issues of the theme (of the study). The common place issues of this study are (but not limited to):

- The nature and administration of Nigerian Educational sector
- Contemporary issues in Nigerian education
- Contribution of the Nigerians to the global community

Administration of the Nigerian Education Sector

In Nigeria, the responsibility for administering the education sector has been asserted by several scholars to be a function shared among the federal, state, and local governments (Adekoya 2023; Ige and George n.d; Haastrup and Adeniyi n.d; Audu & Lawani 2022; Etalong and Aduma 2022; Emordi 2020). According to Adekoya (2023), he asserted that although education is on the concurrent list in the constitution, the Federal Government has the authority to regulate all sectors, form policies, and ensure quality control. Each tier of government focuses mainly on a specific level of education. By this, the author observed that the deferral government is directly involved in all facets of education. However, Etalong and Aduma (2022) observe that although the federal government provisions are a framework for the entire country's educational system, the state and local government have educational issues under their jurisdiction. In essence the three tiers of government co-manage education with the federal government having more autonomy. This is further supported by the assertions of Audu & Lawani (2022) who opined that the Federal Government supports the state and local governments through counterpart funding to improve the quality of education. The administration of the education system is primarily carried out by education ministries at the federal and state levels, as well as commissions

established for different subsectors of education (Audu & Lawani 2022; Etalong and Aduma 2022; Emordi 2020).

Audu and Lawani (2022) opine that the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) ensures the nationwide coordination, consistency and coherence with the national policies. The authors also opined that at the state level, education ministries develop and implement educational policies, manage and supervise educational institutions, and oversee public elementary and secondary schools. In agreement, Etalong and Aduma (2022) opined that the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) manages basic education, while the Teaching Service Commission handles senior secondary education. Tertiary education is supervised by commissions such as the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), and National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). These commissions make policy decisions, maintain standards through accreditation, distribute government funding, appoint governing council members, and manage day-to-day operations of institutions (Audu & Lawani 2022; Etalong and Aduma 2022; Emordi 2020).

Overall, the Nigerian education system operates under a shared governance structure, with the federal, state, and local governments playing distinct roles and collaborating to enhance education quality and access throughout the country.

Contemporary issues in Nigerian education

The Nigerian educational scene is characterized with variants of issues that are worth consideration. These range from ethno-religious disturbances, policy summersaults, girl child education issues to ethical dilemmas. A number of problems bedevil the Nigeria education systems and has given the sector a bad status and image within the international community (Okwuosa & Modibbo, 2021). Some are discussed in this section:

Poor Funding: In Nigeria, it is a fact that governments at all levels (federal, state and local) have inadequately been funding education. This has resulted in a near collapse of the sector. Teaching and learning infrastructure is a far cry of what is to be expected. Many schools are understaffed, and as such, learners' enrolment may have been negatively affected

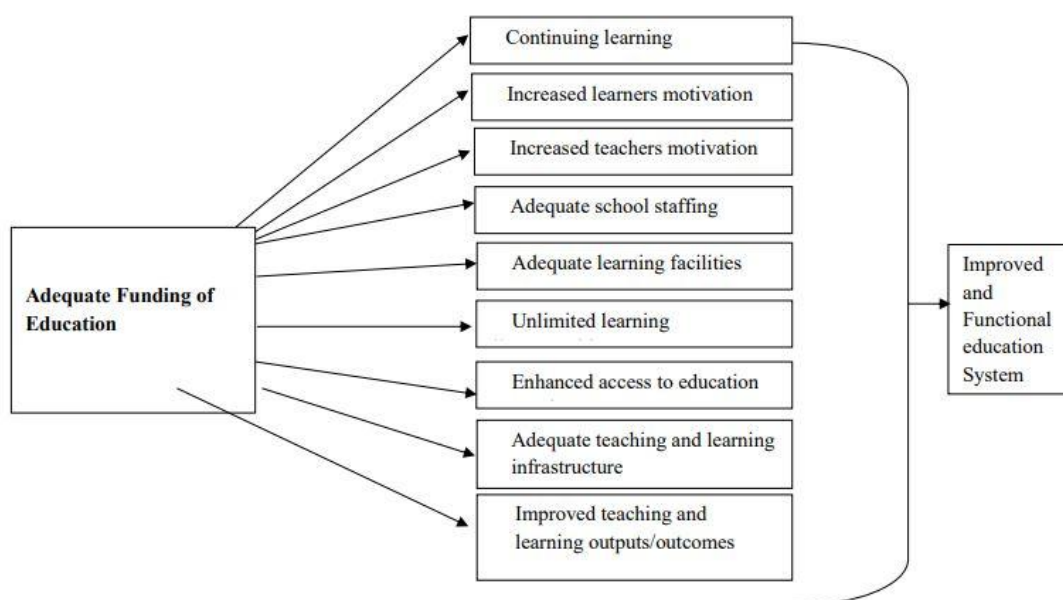


Table 1 (source: OSIESI et al 2022).

Year	Total national Budget (#)	Education budget (#)	% of total budget
2010	40 trillion	293billion	7.19
2011	4.22 trillion	393 billion	9.31
2012	4.74 trillion	453 billion	9.15
2013	4.92 trillion	499 billion	10.15
2014	4.69 trillion	494 billion	10.54
2015	4.49 trillion	434 billion	10.71
2016	6.06 trillion	431 billion	7.92
2017	7.44 trillion	551 billion	7.41
2018	8.60 trillion	605.8 billion	7.04
2019	8.92 trillion	620.5 billion	7.05
2020	10.33 trillion	671.07 billion	6.7
2021	13.08 trillion	742.5 billion	5.6

Source: Federal Ministry of Budget and National Planning (2021)

Table 2.

Educational marketization (Deregulation)

The continued evolution and rapid transformation of the global space (Nigeria inclusive) seems to continuously place great demands on education and professional development. However, the cost of providing or maintaining such quality of education have always been astronomical (especially for African nations). The African discourse, especially Nigeria, has sought ways to manage such cost through certain policies. For the case of Nigeria, a major policy in this direct was deregulation of education (Adetunji et al 2017). In solving the cost and access issues government had introduced deregulation policies, however the policy was not well managed and instead of deregulating the sector, it has been privatized. This is as a result of factors such as ineffective implementation. Hence, it was hi-jacked by Nigerian rich individuals, who perceived the policy as an opportunity to enrich themselves. Likewise, some political officials, using illicitly acquired public funds, to establish university as a capital-intensive project (Adetunji and Adetunji, 2015). Such market/profit driven systems of education have led to several issue beyond the scope of this paper such as: financial exploitation of parents/students, reduction of educational standards, certificate milling and racketeering etc.

These intentions that the government failed to clarify had led to the university education (and education in general) to be proliferated by private agencies. Today, it is observable that there are several primary, secondary and tertiary schools littered all over the country (with little or no supervision). Some of them have become certificate milling and racketeering (miracle-centers) centers. The Nigerian education in contemporary times can barely be said to have a uniform policy. From the researchers' personal experience and observation, a noticeable trend in certain schools is the operation of British curriculum. one may wonder which society such children are built for (Nigeria or Britain). Some schools have no spaces for indigenous language subjects but have at least 2 phonics teachers. In the true essence of it, the Nigerian government is yet to deregulate any of the public universities they owned, rather they have used it as a market-led approach to encouraged other private participants to own their own university. Thus, reducing the attention and demands from government. Although it may sound escapist, but such policies although ill implemented have salvaged the problem of educational access. One can only wonder the level of torture if private universities were absent. However, while more private individuals or organizations are encouraged to establish, finance, and manage private universities, educational planners and administrators, as well as state and federal governments, should through appropriate channels, ensure that educational standards are not compromised and that citizens are not unnecessarily exploit.

Quota System in the Education Sector

At present, one of the most widely recognized gap in Nigeria is the educational imbalance between the Southern and Northern states of the country. Nduka (1974) observed that the

Southern states which had been historically more responsive to Western influences and education have made more educational progress than the predominantly Moslem Northern States, where the Christian influence was to a large extent rejected. The effect of this is still being touted 109 years after the 1914 amalgamation, 69 years after the Kano riots and 63 years after independence. Historically, this imbalance has always been feared and there was a need to check such fears. Thus, the promulgation of supposed nationally-representative policies such as federal character legislations, which will take into cognizance the country's ethno-cultural peculiarities. These legislations, in the context of education, will provide special provisions for persons who can be categorized as emanating from a disadvantaged or an advantaged state. One may wonder if a value, excellence, and human and material development oriented institution like education should fall under the radar of ethno-cultural considerations. However, it is important to state that Nigeria (like other African nations), are gradually becoming an oil-controlled mono-economy (as opined by Adetunji and Adetunji, 2015.) and as such, the entire socio-political fabric of the nation is geared in this direction—white collar. Thus education, in Nigeria is not just a tool for professional career (or skill development), but a tool for political and socio-economic elevation. For instance, lucrative and even a large chunk of informal jobs in Nigeria all place high emphasis on academic certificates. Thus, making education a tool for status and economic sustenance, and the necessity to make such a tool in the hands of anyone. Education in this light is seen as a natural resource that must be shared just like every other resources in the country. After all, no one in the country can lay claim to western education as it was brought by foreigners (and no one should be made solely enjoy its dividends, or to suffer the deprivation of such national resources based on some ancestral historical mistakes on the part of Arab/Islamic north, or uncritical colonial discipleship on the part of Judeo-Greco Christian south). This has made the attainment of degrees a certificate-driven process and a “make or mar” end, were persons desire the “gown” for the benefits of the “town”.

Although this may be a valid argument (in some quarters), it however doesn't insulate the country from suffering the consequences of being a certificate centered economy, or one taking education as a national resource that must be shared equally. Such ethno-cultural notion has led to several unpopular education policies in Nigeria such as:

- i. Educational Backwardness: This policy ensures a certain percentage of admission chances is reserved for the states considered to be educationally disadvantaged or backward.
- ii. Catchment area policy: This is designed that a certain percentage of admission slots must be reserved for the indigenes of the areas in which universities are located.
- iii. Quota system (in Education): This policy provides that allocation of certain percentages of admission slots into Nigerian universities be based on populations, ethnic consideration and states of origin.

Akani (1996) posits that the above policies resulted in the reduction of admission standards and this allowed poorly qualified candidates to be admitted into Nigerian Universities. This is because the policy conferred on the various categories of persons the right of admission

whether qualified or not. Akani further noted that the quality of university education in Nigeria has consequently been lowered as a result of the federal Government admission policies which apparently de-emphasize quality. Oduwaiye (2011) warned that much as it is good that the educationally disadvantaged area is being encouraged, it should not be at the detriment of others in a situation where a candidate does not gain access just because of his birth place. Enemuo (2004) argued that the policy encourages social discrimination of one group against the other. He maintained that the quota system in all its ramifications is the practice of favouring some candidates at the expense of others in the university admission. Enemuo further pointed out that the application of the quota system to students' admission denies meritorious candidates admission into the universities. The quota admission system portrays that a candidate from the Southern state with university matriculation examination scores of 300 out of 400 may not get admission into the university but his/her counterpart from the North with a lower score may be admitted. Similarly, a candidate with 280 score out of 400 from educationally advanced states may not get admission but his/her counterpart from educationally disadvantaged state with lower score may be admitted. Thus quota system has created inequality in the provision of university education and equity has been sacrificed on the altar of quota system of admission.

Implications

Merit is sacrificed on the altar of federal character and ethnic balancing. The implication is clear as mediocrity seem to find their way into Universities.

- It has political intentions more than educational intentions.
- Well qualified students are deprived the opportunity to have education, all in the name of the quota system.
- It has made the institutions become more of center of ethnic patronage than of academic excellence.
- It created the ugly impression that a particular section of the country must stop or slow down educational pursuit for the other section to catch up with her or even surpass her. This is a dangerous trend in a supposedly egalitarian society where no one should be oppressed or suppressed.
- The general public will also suffer from the effect of quota system. This should be expected because where the never-do-wells under the umbrella of quota find places in our higher institutions, the fact remains that they may graduate without learning much. These most likely will make ways into the society for jobs, secure it under the same quota/tribal system, and the long term effects will be beyond literary expression

It is pretty obvious that the philosophy, the rationale behind the establishment of government schools in Nigeria is already set at nought and the noble national objectives of the educational system set forth in the National Policy on education (2004), namely using

education as instrument par excellence for building a just and egalitarian society and promotion of the emotional, physical and psychological health of all children” are either lip service or rhetoric. In conclusion, one may wonder if a problem that has lasted for half a century can ever be totally annihilated someday. It may at best become a way of life—culture.

Educational crises and religious undercurrents in Nigeria

Nigeria has faced educational crises linked to religious factors, leading to detrimental effects on the quality of education and exacerbating the gap between the northern and southern regions (Ushe 2015; Bertoni et al 2019; Kitause and Achunike 2013). The prevalence of out-of-school children is a major issue, particularly in the northern region, with over 10 million children lacking access to education, primarily due to poverty, religious-borne violence and terrorism, and cultural practices that discourage girls' education (WHO 2010). A very popular instance is the gruesome murder of a girl named Deborah by her school mates. She was filmed being burnt alive in her school by her angry colleagues. She was said to have blasphemed the name of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). Such activities have kept girls from school, and have made many others live in fear. Violent conflicts, such as the Boko Haram insurgency, have further disrupted the education system, resulting in the destruction of schools and the loss of teachers and students' lives. Religious tensions have also played a role, as demonstrated by incidents like the 2000 religious clashes in Kaduna, which resulted in significant casualties and the destruction of schools (Ogunode and Musa 2020).

Policy summersault in the Nigerian Educational discourse

The Nigerian educational system has been plagued by frequent policy changes, leading to negative consequences for the quality of education. These policy summersaults have caused confusion among stakeholders and hindered the continuity of educational policies (Babalola 2018; MUYIWA 2015; Ozohu-Suleiman 2011). Some notable examples include the Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy, which initially aimed to provide free and compulsory education but was weakened by amendments (Babalola 2018). The cancellation and subsequent reinstatement of the Post-Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (Post-UTME) also disrupted efforts to assess students' readiness for tertiary education. The introduction of the 6-3-3-4 education system and subsequent changes, such as the 9-3-4 system, further exacerbated the lack of consistency. Additionally, while the reintroduction of History in schools was a positive step, its implementation has been slow (MUYIWA 2015). These policy summersaults underscore the need for a clear, sustainable, and well-implemented educational policy framework in Nigeria. Continuity in policy implementation is crucial to ensure the desired educational outcomes are achieved (Ozohu-Suleiman 2011; Babalola 2018; MUYIWA 2015). The constant changes in educational policies in Nigeria have had several negative effects on the quality of education in the country. These effects

include disruption of educational continuity, reduced quality of education, reduced investment in education, diminished global competitiveness, and increased social inequality. The inconsistency in policies has led to confusion among stakeholders, a decline in the quality of education, lack of resources, limited global opportunities, and further disadvantage for students from low-income backgrounds. To address these issues, there is a need for a stable and coherent educational policy environment that prioritizes quality education and provides continuity in policies and frameworks.

The state of girl child education in Nigeria

The state of girl child education in Nigeria has seen some improvements, but a significant gender gap remains. Despite government and non-governmental efforts, girls in Nigeria still encounter various challenges when it comes to accessing quality education (Alabi et al 2014; Alabi and Alabi 2014; Kainuwa and Yusuf 2013; Envuladu, et al 2016). Cultural barriers play a role, as certain beliefs and practices limit girls' educational opportunities, perpetuating high rates of illiteracy among girls (Alabi et al 2014; Envuladu, et al 2016). Poverty is another major obstacle, as many families cannot afford to send their daughters to school, and some prioritize their sons' education over their daughters' (Kainuwa and Yusuf 2013; Envuladu, et al 2016). Girls from impoverished backgrounds often need to work to support their families, making regular school attendance difficult (Alabi et al 2014; Alabi and Alabi 2014). Additionally, early marriage is prevalent in some regions, leading to low enrollment of girls as they often drop out of school and miss out on further education (Alabi et al 2014; Alabi and Alabi 2014). Security concerns, particularly in Northern Nigeria, also impact girls' education, as the abduction of schoolgirls by groups like Boko Haram has resulted in school closures and decreased enrollment of girls.

Educational crises with tribal Undercurrents

The Nigerian educational system has been facing an educational crisis exacerbated by tribal undercurrents (Amali and Jekayinfa 2013; Odeyemi 2014; Ozoemena 2016; Adetunberu and Bello 2019). Marginalization and exclusion of certain tribes have created tensions and conflicts, resulting in uneven educational development across the country. Language differences, with over 250 ethnic groups speaking their own languages, have also hindered learning, leading to poor academic performance and low enrollment rates (Odeyemi 2014). Conflicts between tribes, such as the Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba, have further disrupted access to education in certain regions (Amali and Jekayinfa 2013; Odeyemi 2014; Ozoemena 2016; Adetunberu and Bello 2019). These tribal undercurrents have resulted in reduced access to education, poor academic performance, limited cultural exchange, and hindered economic development. Addressing these issues is crucial to ensure equal educational opportunities for all Nigerian students, regardless of their tribe or language (Amali and Jekayinfa 2013; Odeyemi 2014; Ozoemena 2016; Adetunberu and Bello 2019).

Ethical dilemmas in the Nigerian educational systems

The Nigerian educational system faces several ethical dilemmas that impact the quality of education provided in the country (Chima 2015; Igbinomwanhia and Akanni 2019; Tal-Alon and Shapira-Lishchinsky 2019). Academic dishonesty is a major concern, with cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of dishonest behavior undermining the integrity of the educational process. This has contributed to the declining quality of education in Nigeria. Teacher misconduct is another issue, with some educators engaging in activities such as sexual harassment, favoritism, and discrimination, negatively affecting students' academic performance and well-being (Igbinomwanhia and Akanni 2019). Unfair treatment of students based on their socio-economic background is also prevalent, leading to discrimination and bias in the classroom, which hampers academic achievement and self-esteem. Inadequate funding is yet another ethical dilemma, as many schools lack essential resources like textbooks, laboratories, and classrooms, making it difficult for students to learn effectively and raising concerns about the fairness and equality of the educational system (Chima 2015; Igbinomwanhia and Akanni 2019).

Educational interventions in Nigeria

Nigeria has implemented several educational interventions to improve education quality and address challenges in the system. These interventions include:

Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme: Established in 1999, it provides free, compulsory, and quality basic education for Nigerian children aged six to fifteen. Its goals are increased access, improved teaching and learning quality, and gender equity promotion.

Back-to-School Programme: Initiated in 2012, this program tackles the issue of out-of-school children, primarily in Nigeria's northern region. It offers free education, textbooks, and learning materials to reintegrate dropouts.

Teacher Professional Development: The government has implemented various programs to enhance teachers' skills and knowledge. These include in-service training, workshops, and seminars to ensure quality education delivery.

National Examination Council (NECO) and West African Examination Council (WAEC): These national examination bodies conduct standardized exams for secondary school students, ensuring quality education and readiness for higher education.

Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND): Established in 1993, TETFUND provides funding for tertiary education development. It focuses on improving infrastructure, providing research grants, and supporting staff development.

Safe School Initiative (SSI): Launched in 2014, the SSI promotes secure learning environments. It enhances school security through measures like fencing, CCTV cameras, and security personnel in areas affected by insecurity and violence.

National Youth Service Corps (NYSC): This mandatory one-year program targets Nigerian graduates under 30. It aims to foster national unity, equip graduates with skills, and enable them to contribute to national development.

Summarily, Nigeria has implemented various educational interventions to improve the quality of education and address the challenges facing the educational system. While these interventions have had some positive impact, more needs to be done to address issues such as inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and lack of access and equity. The government needs to increase funding for education, improve governance structures, and address the shortage of qualified teachers to enhance the quality of education in Nigeria. Additionally, the Nigerian educational system should prioritize technical and vocational education to promote entrepreneurship and address the issue of youth unemployment in the country.

Successes of Nigerian students in the diaspora

Nigerian students in the diaspora have achieved significant successes in various fields, both in academics and beyond. Here are some examples of Nigerian students' successes in the diaspora:

Academic Excellence: Nigerian students have excelled in academic fields, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) disciplines, in top universities across the world. According to the 2020 Open Doors Report, Nigeria ranks as the 13th leading country of origin for international students studying in the United States, with over 13,000 students enrolled in various degree programs. Nigerian students have also been awarded prestigious scholarships, such as the Rhodes Scholarship, Chevening Scholarship, and Fulbright Scholarship, among others, to study in top universities around the world. Also, the Nigerian educational system has produced many notable individuals who have excelled in various fields, both locally and internationally. Some of these individuals include Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka, former World Bank Vice President Obiageli Ezekwesili, and author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, among others. These individuals are a testament to the quality of education offered in Nigeria.

Sports: Nigerian students in the diaspora have also excelled in sports, representing their adopted countries in various sporting events, such as the Olympic Games, World Cup, and other international competitions. Nigerian-born athletes, such as Anthony Joshua (Boxing), Christian Okoye (NFL), Hakeem Olajuwon (NBA), and Amusan (Olympics gold medalist) have become world-renowned sports icons and inspirations to many young people.

Art and Culture: Nigerian students in the diaspora have also contributed to the arts and cultural scene, showcasing Nigeria's rich cultural heritage to the world. Nigerian musicians, actors, and writers, such as Wizkid, Davido, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, among others, have gained international recognition and awards for their work, promoting Nigeria's culture and values on the global stage. Also, Nigerian students have produced and directed award-winning films and documentaries, such as "Òlòtūrè," a film that sheds light on human trafficking in Nigeria.

In sum, Nigerian students in the diaspora have achieved significant successes in various fields, including academic excellence, entrepreneurship, sports, and art and culture.

Grand contribution of Nigerian students to the global community

Nigerian students have made significant contributions to the global community in various ways, particularly in the areas of science, technology, and entrepreneurship. Here are some examples:

Science and Technology: Nigerian students have excelled in science and technology, making significant contributions to research and innovation globally. For instance, Philip Emeagwali, a Nigerian computer scientist, developed a formula that made supercomputing faster and more efficient. Similarly, Dr. Ayodele Ogunye, a Nigerian chemist, developed a new drug delivery system that could revolutionize cancer treatment.

Entrepreneurship: Nigerian students have also made significant contributions to entrepreneurship globally. Many Nigerian students have launched successful startups, such as Paystack, a Nigerian fintech company that was acquired by Stripe for over \$200 million in 2020. Nigerian students have also founded companies that are solving social and environmental challenges, such as Farmcrowdy, an agritech platform that connects small-scale farmers with investors.

Leadership: Nigerian students have also demonstrated leadership skills and a commitment to social justice, contributing to global movements for change. For instance, Chidera Okolie, a Nigerian student at Georgetown University, founded the Black Diaspora Coalition, a global network of Black students and young professionals advocating for racial justice and equity.

Arts and Culture: Nigerian students have also made significant contributions to the global arts and culture scene. Nigerian students have also contributed to the global music industry, with Nigerian musicians like Burna Boy and Wizkid gaining international recognition and winning awards.

Summarily, Nigerian students have made significant contributions to the global community in various areas, including science and technology, entrepreneurship, leadership, and arts

and culture. These successes are a testament to the talent, hard work, and resilience of Nigerian students, which should serve as a source of pride and inspiration for many Nigerians, both at home and abroad. Also, these go a long way to reveal some strengths in the Nigerian educational system. African educational system may not be as terrible after all, as their products and even lecturers continue to excel in foreign countries. Though these achievements do not negate or brush aside the germane issues that the African educational system hones, it is however an attempt to give credits to the resilient and hardworking spirits of Nigerian students/lecturers despite their very unfavorable backgrounds. The source of such resilience and academic sagacity is an area of research that remains unexplored. These contributions demonstrate the potential of Nigerian students to drive global development and innovation, and highlights the importance of investing in education, and more importantly, supporting young talent in the continent.

Conclusion

The Nigerian educational system is characterized by a combination of strengths, weaknesses, and challenges. While scholars have identified areas that require improvement, such as inadequate funding, teacher quality, and entrepreneurship education, the Nigerian government has implemented various interventions to address these issues. The Universal Basic Education Program, Back-to-School Program, and initiatives for teacher professional development and school safety are among the measures taken to enhance the quality of education. Additionally, national examination bodies and the Tertiary Education Trust Fund have contributed to standardized assessments and the development of tertiary education.

However, the system faces several ethical dilemmas, including academic dishonesty, teacher misconduct, unfair treatment based on socio-economic background, and inadequate funding. These challenges hinder the delivery of quality education and contribute to the widening gap in educational opportunities.

Despite these challenges, Nigerian students in the diaspora have achieved significant successes, excelling in various fields such as academics, sports, entrepreneurship, and arts and culture. Their accomplishments showcase the talent and potential within the Nigerian educational system, demonstrating the global impact of Nigerian education and the contributions of Nigerian students to the global community.

Moving forward, it is crucial for the Nigerian government to address the identified weaknesses and ethical dilemmas within the educational system. This requires increased funding, improved governance structures, and measures to attract and retain qualified teachers. Prioritizing technical and vocational education can promote entrepreneurship and address youth unemployment, while also addressing cultural and gender-based barriers to education.

By strengthening the educational system, Nigeria can foster a conducive learning environment, provide equal opportunities for all students, and unleash the full potential of its young population. Investing in education is an investment in the future of the nation, driving economic growth, social progress, and global competitiveness.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions from the studies on the Nigerian educational system, the following recommendations can be made to improve the quality of education and address the identified challenges:

1. Increase funding for education: The Nigerian government should prioritize allocating a larger portion of the national budget to education. Adequate funding is essential for improving infrastructure, providing necessary resources, and enhancing the overall learning environment.
2. Enhance teacher quality: Implement comprehensive measures to improve the quality of teaching staff. This can be achieved through ongoing professional development programs, recruitment of highly qualified teachers, and the establishment of rigorous standards for teacher certification and evaluation.
3. Strengthen entrepreneurship education: Incorporate entrepreneurship education at all levels of the Nigerian educational system. This should include curriculum development, teacher training, and partnerships with the private sector to provide practical skills and knowledge needed for entrepreneurship and self-employment.
4. Promote technical and vocational education: Give greater emphasis to technical and vocational education to equip students with practical skills that match the needs of the job market. This will help address youth unemployment and contribute to the country's economic growth.
5. Improve governance and policy stability: Establish a stable and coherent educational policy framework that promotes consistency and continuity in policies and frameworks. This will provide clarity to stakeholders and ensure the effective implementation of educational initiatives.
6. Address ethical dilemmas: Take strong measures to combat academic dishonesty by promoting academic integrity and implementing robust systems to detect and prevent cheating and plagiarism. Similarly, address teacher misconduct through strict enforcement of ethical standards and the establishment of mechanisms for reporting and addressing cases of misconduct.
7. Bridge the gender gap in education: Develop targeted interventions to address the barriers that hinder girls' access to education, such as cultural practices, poverty, early marriage, and security concerns. Implement initiatives that promote girls' enrollment, retention, and completion of education, ensuring equal opportunities for all.
8. Strengthen international collaboration: Foster partnerships and collaborations with international institutions, organizations, and experts to share best practices,

resources, and expertise. This can help bring in innovative approaches and support the implementation of effective educational strategies.

9. Continuous monitoring and evaluation: Establish a robust system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of educational interventions, policies, and programs. Regular assessments will help identify areas of improvement, measure progress, and inform evidence-based decision-making.

By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can work towards a more inclusive, equitable, and high-quality educational system that prepares students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. Education is a fundamental catalyst for national development, and investing in it is crucial for Nigeria's sustainable growth and prosperity.

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