

Barriers to Education Development in Nigeria: An Analysis

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Abstract

Education is germane to the development of a country. Education determines the level of technological and economic output of a country. Education in Nigeria has been adopted as an instrument for attaining socio-economic development. The development of the Nigerian educational system is hampered by many barriers. This paper is aimed to critically discuss some of these barriers. Secondary data were adopted for use in the paper. The secondary data were collected from sources like print resources and online publications. The paper identified poor funding, inadequate teachers, shortage of infrastructure facilities, lack of current data, corruption, the appointment of non-professional administrators, poor supervision, poor implementation of education policies and insecurity as barriers to education development in Nigeria. Based on this, the paper recommended an increment in the funding of education. Employment of more professional teachers. Provision of adequate infrastructure facilities. Generation of current data for education planning. Appointment of experienced and professional educationists to manage the educational institutions. Ensure full implementation of educational policies and improve the quality of instructional supervision. Deployment of ICT and artificial intelligence to fight corruption and insecurity in Nigeria.

Keywords: Development, education, Nigeria, barriers

Introduction:

Western Education was introduced into Nigeria by the colonial master. Since then, western education has become part and parcel of the Nigerian educational system. Education has been defined by different scholars. For instance, Akpan (2018) defined education as involving the process of teaching and learning. The learner is taught to understand the deeper things of life, the need for good human relations and the cause-and-effect relationship in life. Education can also be viewed as any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual. It is the process by which a society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another. Peerzada (2016) that education is the unfolding of what is already enfolded in man. This implies that education is a process through which a person is trained to develop his innate potential so that it can be fully expressed externally. This means that education is the gradual or progressive development of a person's innate powers or potential. It is the development from within the individual until the person becomes conscious of his unique existence and begins to seek his place in society (Peerzada, 2016).

Education is an organized process meant to transfer knowledge. Education is a form of process that involves teaching and learning. Education is the process by which individuals are selected and assigned social roles while the second shows that the level of development in a society is dependent on the type (or quality) of education given to its members. All in all, education is a

continuous learning process through which members of a society acquire the requisite knowledge and skills to facilitate the effective performance of assigned social responsibilities (NOUN, 2012).

Education is the key that opens the doors for the development, modernization, civilization and industrialization of any nation. It is the means, through which a nation can harness numerous resources, develop its manpower and improve the quality of life of its citizens. In any country of the world, education is the backbone of scientific and technological development. It enhances self-reliance for an individual and the nation. A self-reliant nation does not depend on foreign goods for survival and self-reliant people do not depend on government for the provision of employment. The individual can gainfully employ himself/herself and be able to attend to his/her critical needs. In this way, education reduces the level of poverty in a nation. Thus, quality functional education contributes to national development in this direction. Education liberates the people from ignorance and promotes the socio-economic and political development of a nation. It is based on this that Nigeria adopts education as an instrument par excellence for national development (Akpan, 2018).

Education is very vital in every human existence and societal development. It facilitates the rate of development and improves the standard of living of the people. A well-educated person acquires knowledge for critical thinking and can use the knowledge and skills acquired through education to create wealth especially now that we are living in a knowledge-driven economy. Education helps a person to understand society better contribute positively to its development and become more useful to the society in which he lives. It is through education that the task of processing human resources into well-trained human capital needed in any country of the world can be achieved. Thus, education is an investment in human capital development (ibid.).

In Nigeria, the objective of education according to the National Policy on Education FRN (2014) includes; a free and democratic society; a just and egalitarian society united strong and self-reliant nation; a great and dynamic economy and a land of bright and full of opportunities for all citizens. From these broad policy objectives were derived the National Policy on Education which spelt out the philosophy of Nigerian Education. Each level of education derived its purpose from this philosophy. The realization of the education objectives depends on effective administration and management of the education and its resources. It is very important to examine the developmental barriers hindering the development of education in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework:

This paper is anchored on role theory that was developed by George Herbert Mead in 1934. The role theory hinges on the principle that the developing social role theory focuses on how well individuals adopt and act out their roles during interactions. Individuals do not necessarily embrace all the identities associated with their roles, though; the extent to which they are committed to identifying with the expectations placed on them can vary. As an outcome of these interactions, individuals may identify themselves or be identified by others as holding particular statuses or positions thus, it has been noted that when a structure is not performing its function optimally; vices often appear (Joseph et al., 2017) this social vice can be in form of insecurity. The social role refers to the behaviours and responsibilities expected of individuals in society. In terms of gender, social roles prescribe certain behaviours to men and women. These roles are known as gender roles. Women's gender roles, or social roles for women, include mother, caretaker, and helper. Men's gender roles or social roles for men include breadwinner, protector, and leader.

The theory is related to the present study because the business of education administration and management belongs to every stakeholder in the country. Stakeholders in the business of education include the government, parents, private institutions, religious institutions, international institutions and government institutions. The educational sector is on the concurrent list in Nigeria implying is a social good that the government must provide for its citizens. The Nigerian government has a unique and special role to play in ensuring the provision of affordable, accessible and quality education for all citizens respective of tribe and religious differences.

Barriers to Education Development in Nigeria:

Many factors are hindering educational development in Nigeria but some of the factors are as appended:

- i. **Poor funding:** Poor funding of education in Nigeria is a challenge to its development. Thus, Ayeni (2017) noted that fund is the life wire of every organisation or society, Funding is critical to the development of education. The Nigerian government over the years has failed to implement the 15%-20% UNESCO recommendation for education. A study by Macrotrend (2021) and Ogunode et al. (2023b) in the table below reviews federal education funding allocation for one decade.

Table 1: Nigeria Education Spending - Historical Data¹

Year	Education Spending (% of GDP)	Annual Change
2021	5.14%	0.01%
2020	5.13%	-0.72%
2019	5.86%	-0.09%
2018	5.94%	-0.18%
2017	6.12%	-0.53%
2016	6.65%	-2.60%
2015	9.26%	0.22%
2014	9.04%	0.36%
2013	8.68%	0.13%
2012	8.55%	0.67%
2011	7.88%	1.71%
2010	6.17%	1.71%

Table 1 of Nigerian education spending revealed that in 2021, 2022, 2019,2018,2017,2016,2015,2014,2013,2012,2011 and 2010 the education spending in GDP percentage had 5.14%, 5.13%, 5.86%, 5.94%, 6.12%, 6.65%, 9.26%, 9.04%, 8.68%, 8.55%, 7.88% and 6.17%. Poor funding of education has been concluded by Olowonefa et al. (2022) is responsible for the poor development in the sector. Shortage of teachers, facilities, poor supervision, poor motivation of teachers, poor research and low quality of education are linked to poor funding of education in Nigeria by Ogunode & Madu (2021). The poor funding of education in Nigeria has affected the development of education. It has hindered effective

¹ Source: Macrotrends, 2021

administration and management and made it impossible to realize the various objectives of education.

- ii. **Inadequate teachers:** Inadequate professional teachers in all forms of Nigerian educational institutions are another barrier to educational development. Teachers are trained professionals who are to teach in various schools across the country. The qualifications, experiences and training of these teachers matter in determining their output. This is why scholars have argued that training improves the performance of individuals on their jobs by correcting any deficiency in human effort (Ogunode & Ayeni, 2023). Unfortunately, educational institutions in Nigeria appear facing the problem of teacher shortage. For instance, the 2018 National Personnel Audit (NPA), conducted by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), reported, that there was a deficit of 135,319 teachers at the Early Childhood Care Development Education, 139,772 deficit in primary schools and 2,446 shortage in Junior Secondary Schools across the nation (Independent, 2019). Also at the tertiary institutions especially at the universities. Also, Punch (2022) as captured in National Universities Commission data indicated that federal universities in Nigeria suffer a shortage of full-time professors. According to the data, no federal university scored up to 50 per cent in the ranking of full professors. This implies that no federal university has the required number of full professors. Some of the federal universities ranked in the top 10 are the Usmanu Dan-Fodiyo University, Sokoto, with 36.44 per cent; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, 35.80 per cent; Federal University of Technology, Akure, 27.28 per cent; Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, 27.25 per cent; the University of Abuja, 25.33 per cent; the University of Benin, 23.26 per cent; University of Port Harcourt, 21.26 per cent; the University of Calabar, 21.20 per cent; and the University of Ilorin, 21.12 per cent. There is no meaningful development that can be attained in the educational sector without the employment of adequate and qualified teachers. The shortage of professional teachers in the Nigerian educational sector has slowed down the development of education.
- iii. **Shortage of infrastructure facilities:** Infrastructure facilities are components of the school system that provide essential services and support for the delivery of educational services. Emetarom (2004) viewed school facilities as physical equipment that assists and enables teaching and learning in order to enhance results. She noted that such facilities function as the fulcrum for which teaching and learning are pleasurably built while Ogunode (2020) described infrastructure as the operational input of every instructional programme and constitutes elements that are necessary for teaching and learning. Such include buildings, laboratories, machinery, furniture and electrical fixtures. These must be functional with other aspects of the community, such as health centres, libraries, and good roads and must be large enough to allow for expansion as enrolments expand. The importance of infrastructural facilities in educational institutions according to Ogunode & Agwor (2021) includes aiding the effective delivery of administrative functions in schools; making the delivery of services fast and reliable; enabling teachers to deliver lessons fast; infrastructural facilities provide conducive working environment for both teachers and students; infrastructural facilities enable learners to learn at ease and learn well; infrastructural facilities enable the teachers to teach well, prepare

their lessons, and deliver them online (ICT). The importance of school infrastructural facilities in the realization of educational goals cannot be underestimated. School facilities aid the delivery of the teaching and learning process in the schools. The school offices provide a conducive working environment for teachers, the classrooms help the learners to learn while the school fence protects students, the teachers, and school administrators from criminals. The school plant protects the entire human resources from the sun, rain, heat cold, and snow (Ogunode & Agwor, 2021). Many studies have confirmed a shortage of infrastructure facilities in some forms of the Nigerian educational system. For instance, Babatope (2010) conducted a study in the Southwestern part of Nigeria and discovered that universities located in the region are faced with the problem of inadequate infrastructure facilities. Generally, Tribune (2021) acknowledged that Nigerian tertiary institutions due to population and high enrolment are facing the problem of facilities shortage. Regarding secondary school education. Ayeni et al. (2019) and Ebehikhalu & Dawam (2016) noted that most facilities in schools across the country are not adequate for the students and are in bad condition.

- iv. **Lack of current data:** The lack of current and reliable education data in Nigeria has affected the development of education. Data is very important in the realization of educational objectives because it gives direction to planning (Halal et al., 2021; Borisade, 2002; Benwari & Dambo, 2014). Unfortunately, educational data are not well generated and made available for planning at the right. For instance, one of the international organizations working in Nigeria on educational issues named the British Council, in 2014 observed that access to reliable and complete information on education in Nigeria has for a long time proved difficult. The development of a national database for education statistics has been slow and various data-generating agencies² often used different sample designs, methods of data collection, analysis and reporting, different modes of disaggregation and definitions of indicators. The absence of rudimentary data at the school and local level in many areas is often viewed as a crisis, inhibiting the development of effective education planning, monitoring, programming and policy-making. Inadequate data for effective planning is one of the major problems facing the administration of education in Nigeria and it has slowed down educational development (Ogunode et al., 2021).
- v. **Corruption:** Corruption is a great barrier to the development of education in Nigeria. Thus, corruption is a phenomenon that is practically acknowledged by individuals as a way of life (Ayeni et al., 2018). UNESCO (2014) reports that Nigeria is among the 37 countries that are losing money spent on education because children are not learning. UNESCO disclosed that the menace is already costing governments USD 129 billion a year. It stressed further that despite the money being spent, the rejuvenation of primary education is not so soon because of poor-quality education that cannot ensure that children learn (NEEDS, 2014). The above is corroborated by the observation of scholars who argued that corruption poses a challenge to the well-being and sustainable peace of Nigerians (Ayeni & Sani, 2021). Premium Time (2020) reports that Transparency International noted that 66

² including the Federal Ministry of Education, Universal Basic Education Commission, National Population Commission and National Bureau of Statistics

per cent of the money Nigerian governments budgeted for education was stolen by corrupt officials. The group presented the report at its sub-regional meeting in Abuja as part of the policy papers on land corruption and corruption in education systems in West Africa. According to the report, “corruption is commonplace in education systems across the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). This affects education access, quality, inclusion and learning outcomes with devastating consequences, not only for national economic growth but also for the life chances of children, their families and communities.” The report highlighted Resource misallocation, corrupt procurement, exchange of sex for grades, examination malpractices, fake qualifications, teacher absenteeism, and corrupt recruitment practices as the various corruption risks and challenges facing education systems in all countries (Premium Times, 2020). Transparency International SERAP stressed that corrupt practices have been identified in Nigeria’s education sector. The report revealed that corruption has a devastating impact on national development, particularly in Africa, hindering progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) now SDGs, and jeopardizing socio-economic development. The above is supported by Muhammed & Ayeni (2018) when they argued that corruption causes poverty and poverty causes insecurity, With particular reference to Nigeria, it is disheartening to note that this cankerworm was noticed at all levels of education, where massive embezzlement and misappropriation of funds running into millions of Dollar and Billions of Naira are taking place (Premium Times, 2020). Ogunode et al. (2023c), Ogunode et al. (2022), Ogunode & Johnson (2021), Osunyikanmi (2018), Ololube (2016), and Okeyim et al. (2013) lamented that a lot of funds that should have been used to develop the educational sector have been looted, mismanaged and misappropriated. This corruption practices in the educational administration in Nigeria has hindered the development of education. Thus, this phenomenon called corruption has been a basis of worry because of its negative effect on the national economy (Amaechi et al., 2019), the above has made Ogunode et al. (2024a) submit that it is one of the roles of tertiary institutions to curtail corruption through teaching and research.

- vi. **Appointment of non-professional administrators:** Another crucial barrier to the development of education in Nigeria is the appointment of non-professional educationists to head various educational institutions in Nigeria. The Nigerian government is known for appointing people who have no business in education to come and head various agencies and commissions of education. Leadership matters in the realization of education objectives and leadership has a great role to play in the administration and management of educational resources. Due to the complexity of the educational sector and its management, it requires a professional with experience and qualifications in education to manage any educational institution because of the technicality it requires to function. Ogunode (2023) asserted that educational institutions established for the implementation of education programmes, formulation of policies and planning of education need a professional educationist to manage the establishment. The persons to be appointed to head any educational institution should be professional educationists by qualifications. He or she must have studied education in higher institutions must have been registered with the teachers’ registration councils of Nigeria and certified

as a professional teacher and administrator. Okebukola in Dailypost (2015) opined that such a person must be one who was fired by the desire for change in the way things were being done in the sector. He also stated that it is when the country sticks to the right kind of person for the sector that challenges that are responsible for the not-too-encouraging results or output can be tackled. “It is time we tell ourselves that it is no longer going to be business as usual. “This is the period we need to see somebody that is fired up with the desire to positively affect those changes in the education system in our country”.

Atueyi (2019) cited Makinde who asked “`why has a lawyer not been appointed to manage health or an engineer as attorney general to manage justice, or even a doctor to manage defence?” he asked. “Appointing a good journalist to manage education is one of the worst decisions when there is even no guarantee that university professors have not done any better. What you need is a knowledgeable manager of educational human and material resources to get results in these challenging climes. Atueyi (2019) recommended that competence, character and courage should be the watchwords in the appointment of ministers. “Candidates for the minister of education position should be selected and interviewed based on their industry vision and track record. Unfortunately, most people appointed do not have qualifications in educational administration or any track experience. Appointment of weak administrators in Nigerian educational institutions is another big challenge facing the educational administration in Nigeria. Many educational institutions’ administrators appointed to head the schools are not qualified and less exposed to handling the administration and management of educational institutions under them (Zhenseh & Ogunode 2022). The appointment of non-professional educationists as heads of educational institutions in Nigeria has contributed to the slow development of education in Nigeria.

- vii. **Poor Supervision:** Supervision is key to the actualization of quality education at all levels of the educational system. Supervision is the process that involves providing professional advice and assistance to an individual or institution to improve the quality of the system. One major objective of supervision in educational institutions is to improve quality and ensure quality standards are maintained with the view of producing qualified products for the socio-economic and technological advancement of the country (Ogunode & Adanna, 2022). Ezekwugo (2005) instructional supervision is a planned programme required for the improvement of instruction. This implies that instructional supervision involves a set of activities, which are called on to make the teaching-learning process better for the learner.

There has been poor supervision of educational institutions in various forms of education in Nigeria. For instance, in basic education, Emmanuel et al. (2014) and Ekundayo et al. (2013) submitted in their research that supervision is not so effective in secondary school education. Ogunode (2021) maintained that supervision at this stage was weak and ineffective. In tertiary education, Victor, (2007) submitted that lack of proper regulation and supervision is part of the problems bedevilling Nigeria’s educational system. Ogunode (2020) argued that poor supervision is another challenge facing university education in Nigeria. The

supervision of university education in Nigeria is poor and ineffective. The poor supervision is responsible for the poor quality of education in the system. Ogunode & Ayeni (2024) observed that these supervisory agencies of higher institutions have not been effective in the supervision of teaching programmes at the various higher institutions due to many challenges that include underfunding, shortage of staffers, weak leadership and internal problems. The inability of these supervisory agencies to effectively supervise the activities of the higher institutions is one of the factors responsible for poor teaching in the higher institutions in Nigeria.

- viii. **Poor implementation of education policies:** Poor implementation of education policies in Nigeria is a barrier to education development. Awokoya (1981) contends that educational policy is directed towards increasing the quality of life of a people. He believes that the objective of any policy is to satisfy individual needs, community pressures and the degree of complexity and sophistication to which socialized personnel must be educated and trained to meet these demands. Education policy includes laws, rules as well as processes and policies that educational institutions in a local government, state and nation put in place and follow to achieve educational objectives. Yaro (2017) observed that in the Nigerian context for instance, the National Policy on Education which is the nation's education policy document explicitly lays down the guiding principles for effective implementation, management and administration of education policies from basic education up to tertiary education at the federal, state and local tiers of government (FRN, National Policy on Education, 2014). The education policies outlined the government's expectations, standards, aims and objectives as well as the requirements that are necessary to ensure quality service delivery.

The problem in Nigeria is not policy formulation and designing but policy implementation. Yaro (2017) opined that the development of any nation and its achieving greatness depends largely on the development and the effectiveness of implementing appropriate education laws. For this reason, most governments all over the world place much emphasis on educational policies as instruments of national development. In the Nigerian context, despite the importance attached to education policy development, certain challenges affect the implementation of education policies which adversely affects academic excellence. Also, Abdulrahman (2014), Ogunode et al. (2021) and Ogunode & Samuel (2020) noted that designing policies is not the problem but implementation is the problem. Poor implementation of public policies and compromise of public goals for the private interests of public officials have often characterized government business in Nigeria. Abdulrahman (2014) and Ogunode & Akimki (2023) observed that Nigeria is a policy-rich environment but poor in implementation. The capacity and commitment of the government to implement educational policies and processes have been limited due to inadequate resources and political will. Poor funding, faculty policy formulation, political instability, corruption, insecurity and lack of political will have been identified as factors responsible for the poor implementation of educational policies in Nigeria (Ogunode et al., 2023a)

- ix. **Insecurity:** The insecurity problem is another barrier to education development in Nigeria. For the past two decades, Nigeria has been facing various insecurity challenges. Sanni (2015) defined insecurity as the sense of vulnerability,

defenselessness, lack of protection and danger present in the study area, influencing females' participation in education programmes. Beland (2005) defined insecurity as “the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection. Adebayo (2014) noted that the various form of insecurity threatening education development in Nigeria includes kidnapping, terrorism, community conflict, bombing, rape and school attacks.

Specifically, insecurity has affected the Nigerian educational system, especially in the Northern region. It has led to low enrolment, retention and completion rates in most states affected by insecurity. Insecurity has led to the destruction of infrastructure facilities, an unstable academic calendar and poor quality of education. Insecurity has led to the death of students and teachers (Usman, 2021; Hamman-Tukur et al., 2014). Insecurity activity like Boko Haram has greatly affected amenities like schools, houses, hospitals, markets, electricity et cetera (Ogunode et al., 2024b; Atsua, & Abdullahi, 2015). Secondary schools in Borno State for instance have been greatly affected. Almost all the secondary schools in areas affected by the insurgent attacks have been closed down. The state government has attempted to relocate the affected schools in Maiduguri the State capital but facilities to accommodate the large number of students are inadequate as some of the existing schools in the State capital have been converted to camps for internally displaced persons. Hamman-Tukur et al. (2014) in respect of the global education monitoring report (GEM), reported that about 19,000 teachers have been displaced in the region, affecting access to education. Also, the Guardian (2014) reported that from the beginning of 2012, about 70 teachers and more than 1000 school children were killed while some were wounded; 50 schools were burnt and more than 60 others were forced to close. Adebayo (2014) found that as an insurgency group, Boko Haram fighters force their ideology on people through bombings, abduction and slaughtering of human beings, creating palpable fear and a sense of insecurity in the polity. Insecurity in Nigeria has slowed down the development of education in Nigeria. The above has been corroborated by scholars who noted that insecurity has denied people access to education rather than empower them to provide for their basic needs (Ayeni et al., 2019)

Conclusion:

This paper discussed development challenges facing the Nigerian educational system. The paper concluded that poor funding, inadequate teachers, shortage of infrastructure facilities, lack of current data, corruption, the appointment of non-professional administrators, poor supervision, poor implementation of education policies and insecurity are barriers to education development in Nigeria.

Recommendations:

Based on this conclusion, the paper recommended an increment in the funding of education. Employment of more professional teachers. Provision of adequate infrastructure facilities. Generation of current data for education planning. Appointment of experienced and professional educationists to manage the educational institutions. Ensure full implementation of

educational policies and improve the quality of instructional supervision. Deployment of ICT and artificial intelligence to fight corruption and insecurity in Nigeria.

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