

Rise and Fall in Nigeria Education Sector

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Abstract: *This study investigated rise and fall in Nigeria Education Sector. The alarming rate of falling standard in Nigeria education system is seen in current inability of Nigeria Graduate to occupy vacant position in labour market. There is evident of mismatch between educational curriculum requirement and current skill requirement in workplaces. The study adopted a descriptive survey as the design. The population of the study consists of 200 students of University of Abuja. Stratified simple random sampling technique was used to select students for participation. The basis of stratification is based on those who are running post graduate studies programme in University of Abuja. The instrument for data collection is a self-structured questionnaire tagged “Rise and Fall of Nigeria Education System Questionnaire Scale” (RFNESQS). The findings of this study revealed that Over population without adequate facilities, Corruption and Politics in the education system, Inadequate Funding of the education sector, Over emphasis on Paper Qualification and Examination Malpractice were identified as the causes of falling standard in Nigeria education system, while Inadequate training and retraining of lecturers, Negative attitude of students and lecturers to study and work respectively, inadequate employment of qualified lecturers, Over reliance on theory rather than practical in Nigerian Universities and Inadequate funding of Nigerian Universities infrastructures were identified as the major causes of declining quality in Nigeria education system. Increase of Budgetary allocation to education, Enactment of UNESCO 26% education allocation, Reform of curriculum with emphasis on practical, Reward system should be by performance and Provision of Adequate infrastructure facilities were identified as actionable strategy for revamping Nigeria education system.*

Keywords: Education, Falling Standard, Quality of Education, Tertiary Education, Nigeria Education.

1. Introduction

Education in Nigeria is nationally conceptualized not simply as the medium for cultural transmission but the main vehicle for accelerating individual, community and national development. It is a mechanism through which the society generates the knowledge and skills required for its survival and sustenance. It enriches people's understanding of themselves and the world. It improves the quality of their lives and leads to broad social benefits to individuals and society.

Education is the vehicle that helps us produce qualified personnel and manpower required for national development. It helps equip men and women with necessary skill requirements for gaining job employment. However, majority of the skill acquired by Nigerian trained men and women is perceived as inadequate and unfit to match the current requirement of labor market. Scholars have linked the aforementioned problem to issue of falling standard of Nigeria Education and declining quality of Nigeria Education.

There is a general worry about the poor quality of education outputs in Nigeria. People including non- Nigerians, scholars, and researchers have pointed to the declining performance of graduates from the education system relative to what obtained in the past especially in terms of reading, writing, and practical skills (Adeyemi, 2005; Ogum, 2007). A key example is the case of a master's degree student in the researcher's class of Educational Research Methods who wrote “jargon” (could not even spell her name correctly) in two successive examinations! One begins to wonder how that student got to the master's level. There are many of such

students and graduates in Nigeria (Anya, 2003; Onipede, 2003; Ogum, 2007). It is puzzling that why other countries of the world, especially most of the countries in the same level of development with Nigeria are consistently attaining higher standard of education, Nigeria is still lagging behind. Therefore, this study examined the rise and fall in Nigeria Education Sector with the aim of addressing the issues.

Statement of Problem of the Study

The alarming rate of falling standard in Nigeria education system is seen in current inability of Nigeria Graduate to occupy vacant position in labour market. There is evident of mismatch between educational curriculum requirement and current skill requirement in workplaces. Those issues have gain attention among scholars and the discourse on the fall and rise on Nigeria Education Sector is poised to identify the causes and recommend actionable measures for addressing those issues.

Objectives of the Study

This study is aimed at investigating rise and fall in Nigeria Education Sector. Other objectives are as follows;

- Find out the causes of falling standard in Nigeria Education System.
- Discover the causes of declining quality in Nigeria Education System.
- Recommend on how to revamp Nigeria Education System from deterioration.

Research Questions

The following research question were sought so as to provide solutions to the problems of the study.

1. What are the causes of falling standard in Nigeria Education System?
2. What are the major causes of declining quality in Nigeria Education System?
3. How can we revamp Nigeria Education System from deterioration?

Significance of the Study

This study would help proffer solution to the myriads of problems affecting falling standard of education and declining quality of education in Nigeria Education Sector. It would identify the main factors promoting falling standard and declining quality of Education in Nigeria and recommend measures for addressing the issues. This paper would be of immense benefit to school administrators, principals, policy makers, researchers, educationist, schools, Colleges of education, polytechnics, universities, school directors and other education stakeholders.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Falling Standard and Declining Quality in Nigeria Education System

Education is meant to deliver what it ought to deliver (dividends). Any form of Education lacking those dividends, has no quality. According to Professor L.J. Ogbadu in the forward of open secrets of academic excellence, quality education is that its product had sound education which can be defended by its graduate products. From the foregoing, it could be rightly deduced that, when the degree of excellence in education takes down ward movement, its quality is then said to be falling. According to an Igala adage, there is a causative reason which led to the drying of the tree branches. It then means, for every effect there is a cause, upon this premise, there are varied causes for the declining quality of education.

Technically, standard of education can be defined as the rules, regulations, policies, programs and guidelines made by the political environment of educational system and put in place to ensure quality education in Nigeria. These ingredients for ensuring educational quality are written in the National Policy on Education (NPE) which was firstly launched in 1977. These ingredients of standard cut across many areas of education such as planning, implementation, administration, funding and a host of others. According to the National Policy on Education (2013), The National Policy on Education is the national guideline for the effective administration, management and implementation of

education at all tiers of government. The National Policy on Education therefore, is a statement of intentions, expectations, goals, prescriptions, standards and requirements for quality education delivery in Nigeria (FRN, 2013).

The concept "falling standard of Education" is a relative term because there is no well-defined instruments to measure it with utmost reliability and validity. That is why scholars' views on the concept vary. These scholars view it from different perspectives. Jalingo, (2010) sees the concept from admission of Nigerian University products in developed countries universities. That the first six Nigerian Universities (University of Ibadan, Ile Ife, Lagos, Benin, Nsukka and Zaria) had their products competing favourably with products of any other University in the world as their products were sought for by University of Harvard, Cambridge, Oxford and London for admission into their post-graduate courses. These students with record breaking performances when they graduate, are employed by the best multi-national companies and corporate bodies globally unlike today where no Nigerian University is among the top 6,000 Universities of the world. Ochuba, (2008) sees standard from how universities contribute to knowledge and solving problems besetting mankind. According to "Gateway to the Nation" (2010), University of Ibadan is ranked 6,340th University in the world. In Africa, University of Ibadan is ranked 57th, OAU 69th and South African Universities are leading the way in Africa.

The problem of declining quality of education in Nigeria is mainly an administrative one and adequate educational inspection and supervision will produce high quality education, while lack of it will produce declining quality (Arong and Ogbadu, 2010). Borisade (2013) however, discovers that lecturers, students' societal ills, overloaded curriculum were responsible factors and recommends that lecturers welfare, adequate funding, provision of infrastructures, prompt payment of retired staff gratuities and review of overloaded curricula will go a long way at improving the standard of education. Chinelo (2011) posits that when appropriate skills are lacking in any production system, the outcome is poor quality, which undermines capacity building and sustainable development in any nation.

2.2 Nigeria Education System Challenges

The status of the Nigerian educational system at the moment is unenviable. It is low in quality and standard, limited in its reach and disturbing in its future. Beneficiaries of the education system in the period before mid-1970 claimed that this sorry state is something of very recent history. The contention is that the quality of education in Nigeria before this period compared favourably with any educational system in the world; but the state of education today is far from being ideal. Teachers' strikes at all levels of education

and incessant closure of schools have become the norm. Cultism and violent crime are common in institutions of higher learning in most parts of the country. Examination malpractices and admission racketeering is a common phenomenon. Un-conducive teaching and learning environment abound everywhere, teacher quality and quantity, poor remuneration, dilapidated infrastructure, and inadequate learning and teaching materials at all levels of education are the lots of education in Nigeria.

3. Methodology

Research Design

This study was designed to find out the rise and fall in Nigeria Education Sector with the view of addressing declining standard and quality of education in Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey as the design.

Population and Sampling Technique

The population of the study consists of 200 students of University of Abuja. Stratified simple random sampling technique was used to select students for participation. The basis of stratification is based on those who are running post graduate studies programme in University of Abuja.

Instrument and Instrumentation

The instrument for data collection is a researcher self-structured questionnaire tagged “Rise and Fall of Nigeria Education System Questionnaire Scale” (RFNESQS). The instrument is made up of two parts. Part A and B. Part “A” of the instrument contains the biodata of the respondents while part “B” contains 15 items in respect to the three

research questions. Three experts were consulted to help designed the final questionnaire, two from Educational Administration and Management and one from Test and Measurement all from University of Abuja were used to determine the face validity of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established using the test re-test method. The instrument was administered to 200 students of post graduate studies University of Abuja. The same instrument was administered on the same respondents after two weeks interval. Thereafter, the two tests were correlated using Cornbach Alpha internal consistency co-efficient and it yielded 0.85 co-efficient, indicating high reliability. The reliability co-efficient was higher than Ogbazi and Okpala’s (1994) criterion of 0.60 acceptable for good instruments. The instrument was a 4-point rating scale questionnaire with option of Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. It was administered to the respondents with the help of three trained research assistants due to vastness of the area of the study. 200 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents, but only 150 copies were returned and used for the study.

Method of Data Analysis

Data Collected from the 150 respondents were analysed using mean (x) and standard deviations to answer the three research questions. Any mean score from 2.5 and above was strongly agree and agree while any mean from 2.4 and below was adjudged to be to disagree and strongly disagree.

4. Data Presentation and Interpretation

1. Research Question Analysis:

What are the causes of falling standard in Nigeria Education System?

Table 4.1 Causes of falling Standard in Nigeria Education System

<i>Causes of falling standard in Nigeria education system</i>	SA	A	D	SD
Over population without adequate facilities	120	10	15	5
Corruption and Politics in the education system	128	12	2	8
Inadequate Funding of the education sector	132	13	2	3
Over emphasis on Paper Qualification	112	8	23	7
Examination Malpractice	110	21	9	10

Source: Field Survey (2019)

The frequency distribution in table 4.1 reveals that Over population without adequate facilities, Corruption and Politics in the education system, Inadequate Funding of the education sector, Over emphasis on Paper Qualification and Examination Malpractice were perceived as the causes of falling standard in Nigeria education system. A total of 96.7% respondents ranked Inadequate funding as the main cause of falling standard in Nigeria education system. A total

of 90% respondent reported corruption and politics in the education system as a critical factor causing falling standard in Nigeria education system. A total of 87.3% respondents support the view that examination malpractice is a key cause of falling standard in Nigeria education system. A total of 86.7% of the respondents identified over population without adequate facilities as a core factor of falling standard in Nigeria education system. While a total of 80% respondents

affirmed that over emphasis on paper qualification is a factor causing falling standard in Nigeria education system. Finding from this study is in agreement with Mbachu, Charles-Zalakoro, & Frank-Oputu (2016) investigation into falling standard in Nigeria education system were Inadequate

2. Research Question Analysis:

What are the major causes of declining quality in Nigeria Education System?

Table 4.2 Major Causes of declining quality in Nigeria Education System

<i>Causes of Declining Quality</i>	SA	A	D	SD
Inadequate training and retraining of lecturers	123	17	4	6
Negative attitude of students and lecturers to study and work respectively	102	7	11	30
Inadequate employment of qualified lecturers	104	6	15	25
Over reliance on theory rather than practical in Nigerian Universities	113	4	13	20
Inadequate funding of Nigerian Universities infrastructures	116	7	6	21

Source: Field Survey (2019)

The frequency distribution in table 4.2 reveals that inadequate training and retraining of lecturers, Negative attitude of students and lecturers to study and work respectively, inadequate employment of qualified lecturers, over reliance on theory rather than practical in Nigerian Universities and Inadequate funding of Nigerian Universities infrastructures were identified as the major causes of declining quality in Nigeria education system. A total of 93.3% respondents support the view that inadequate training and retraining of lecturers are the main causes of declining quality in Nigeria education system. A total of 82% respondent reported Inadequate funding of Nigerian Universities infrastructures as a critical factor causing declining quality in Nigeria education system. A total of 78% of the respondents identified over reliance on theory rather than practical in Nigerian Universities as a core factor

3. Research Question Analysis:

How can we revamp Nigeria Education System from deterioration?

Table 4.3 Strategy for revamping Nigeria Education System

<i>Strategy for Revamping Nigeria Education System</i>	SA	A	D	SD
Increase of Budgetary allocation to education	115	14	9	12
Enactment of UNESCO 26% education allocation	131	8	5	6
Reform of curriculum with emphasis on practical	122	5	13	10

Funding of the education sector, Corruption and Politics in the education system, examination malpractice, Over population without adequate facilities and Over emphasis on Paper Qualification are considered the causes of falling standard in Nigeria education system.

causing declining quality in Nigeria education system. A total of 73.3% respondents support the view that inadequate employment of qualified lecturers is a key cause of declining quality in Nigeria education system. While a total of 72.7% respondents affirmed that Negative attitude of students and lecturers to study and work respectively is a factor causing declining quality in Nigeria education system. Finding from this study is consistent with Tubosun, Umar and Zubairu (2017) report on declining standard in Nigeria education were inadequate training and retraining of lecturers, Inadequate funding of Nigerian Universities infrastructures, over reliance on theory rather than practical in Nigerian Universities, inadequate employment of qualified lecturers and Negative attitude of students and lecturers to study and work respectively were identified as the major causes of declining quality in Nigeria education system.

Reward system should be by performance	104	16	14	16
Provision of Adequate infrastructure facilities	117	13	12	8

Source: Field Survey (2019)

The frequency distribution in table 4.3 reveals that Increase of Budgetary allocation to education, Enactment of UNESCO 26% education allocation, Reform of curriculum with emphasis on practical, Reward system should be by performance and Provision of Adequate infrastructure facilities were identified as actionable strategy for revamping Nigeria education system. A total of 92.7% respondents support the idea that Enactment of UNESCO 26% education allocation would help to revamp Nigeria education system. A total of 90% respondent reported that Provision of Adequate infrastructure facilities would help to revamp Nigeria education system. A total of 86% respondents

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study examined rise and fall in Nigeria Education Sector. The findings of this study revealed that Over population without adequate facilities, Corruption and Politics in the education system, Inadequate Funding of the education sector, Over emphasis on Paper Qualification and Examination Malpractice were identified as the causes of falling standard in Nigeria education system, while Inadequate training and retraining of lecturers, Negative attitude of students and lecturers to study and work respectively, inadequate employment of qualified lecturers, Over reliance on theory rather than practical in Nigerian Universities and Inadequate funding of Nigerian Universities infrastructures were identified as the major causes of declining quality in Nigeria education system. Increase of Budgetary allocation to education, Enactment of UNESCO 26% education allocation, Reform of curriculum with emphasis on practical, Reward system should be by performance and Provision of Adequate infrastructure facilities were identified as actionable strategy for revamping Nigeria education system. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Budgetary allocation to education should be increased by the government
2. Government should consider the 26% education allocation recommended by UNESCO.
3. There should be much emphasis on acquisition of relevant skills rather than too much emphasis on paper qualification in the labour market.
4. There is need for the provision of adequate infrastructural facilities for effective teaching and learning in schools.
5. Law against corruption in Nigeria should be enacted and enforced irrespective of who is involved.

support the view that Increase of Budgetary allocation to education would help to revamp Nigeria education system. A total of 84.7% of the respondents identified Reform of curriculum with emphasis on practical as critical strategy for revamping Nigeria education system. While a total of 80% respondents affirmed that Reward system by performance would help to revamp Nigeria education system. Finding from this study corroborate with Tubosun, Umar and Zubairu (2017) report on recommended measures for revamping falling standard and declining quality in Nigeria education system.

6. There is need for federal and state government in Nigeria to adequately fund/maintain the existing universities as suggested by Igborgbor (2013) instead of establishing more new ones.

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