

Profiling the Prospects and Challenges of Running a School in the 20th Century; Matters Arising

Eniola 'Keji Ola-Alani PhD¹ and Fowowe S.S²

¹Department of Adult and Primary Education University of Ilorin

Email: childhoodeducationmyconcern@gmail.com

²Department of early childhood Education, College of Specialized and Professional Education

Lagos State University of Education, Oto/ Ijanikin

Abstract: *He who opens a school closes doors to prison. The chief aim of establishing a school is to make the beneficiaries and the Society they live literate and equip them with the coping skills to be able to be useful to themselves. It is against this background that this paper examines what school is and its importance to the larger community, the conceptual framework that supports what school stands for was chronicled. The paper looks at the four major forms of education necessary for the total well beings of the society. The historical underlining about school ownership in Nigeria was equally examined. The paper x-rays the challenges and prospects of running school in Nigeria. Some suggestions were made that are useful for both the existing and prospective school owners.*

Keywords: Total Wellbeing, School, community, incidental education, school owner, community.

Introduction

He, who opens a school, closes doors to prison. The import of this statement is that, school, either a creche, primary secondary, or higher education, is an institution established by mankind to liberate, expose and take away illiteracy out of mankind (Fowowe 2018). It becomes instructive and imperative to distinguish between schooling and education with a view to emphasise the importance of school in our society. School in whatever form is looked at, it is simply a safe place where teaching and learning takes place and being managed by professionals. While education looks at ways beneficiaries change their perception based on what they learn.

There are four ways of Looking at Education. it is not a truce that most people in the country believe that education only embrace the formal school system. To the majority in this category, education means schooling and schooling is education. It is therefore instructive and imperative at this juncture to clear this misconception once and for all, that education is far more than schooling. Schooling is just one of the aspects of education and it came much later than others which our people had been practicing for ages (Ayodele&Yaksal, 2005). Schooling actually belongs to the formal system of education and it is formal because of its well-defined structure, e.g. it is operated in a formal setting called a school, with clearly-defined time table, with subjects taught by officially appointed masters called teachers, and with the learners trained, and all engaged in the same activity as directed by the teacher. Clearly, no doubt, the whole procedure is formal; indeed it could be "regimented" like the show in the army barracks.

The formal education described notwithstanding, there is a form of education obtained before this formalized era. Youths were apprenticed to masters craftsmen and artisans long before the Western form of education came. When this happens, the apprentice receives a course of education, and in the process of training, the master – carpenter, Goldsmith's workshop becomes something of a school. However, the great difference is that, the course is not as clearly defined as what we experienced in the formal school setting. There are no different subjects taught by different teachers, and there is no time-table spelling out what should be done at each different period. Yet, learning goes on even under such an atmosphere. So, this is a form of education all the same, only that it is non-formal.

There are other forms of learning apart from these two, called informal of education. Its major characteristic is the fact that, it is acquired first at home, then in the community and finally in any other place where there are people. So, it is not just the parents or siblings that do impart it; others in society and even nowadays schools do impart it. The three are not even the only forms of education, there is still a lot of learning that one "picks up" without even being aware that anything is going on and it is called incidental education. Those forms are briefly explained:

- a. Incidental Education: the acquisition of knowledge, ideas and insights simply by some "accidental" encounter and it is lifelong learning.
- b. Informal Education: acquired through learning experiences that are unconsciously built into normal activities of society.
- c. Non-Formal Education: Consciously organized education, training and learning activities not necessarily within the four walls of the classroom, nor under the strict jurisdiction of an educational institution.

- d. Formal Education: Institutional or school education with regulations, syllabuses / curricula, structured and controlled activities, directed by teachers and certified by state-approved examinations, and usually segmented into pre, primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

Conceptual Framework

School:

A school is an institution that provides instruction in a particular field. It can also be defined as an institution dedicated to providing learning spaces and learning environments for the instruction of students (or pupils) under the direction of a teacher. A school is established for the purpose of teaching and learning will be there, it becomes increasingly important that teachers and learners are properly accommodated to facilitate teaching and learning. This is the essence of school facilities and facilities (Alimi 2004). School facilities are thus the spatial interpretation and physical representation of the school curriculum. In Nigeria, secondary schools are generally expected to function according to the achievement of the country's educational goals, regardless of who owns them. To this end, students are expected to perform well in their final exams. Because this determines the quality of school performance. This is one of the parameters used to measure the effectiveness of school systems. The better the student's performance, the more effectively the system is adopted (Philiat&Wanjobi 2011)

The role and importance of schools in the growth and development of any country is well documented in the existing literature. According to Cole (2002), a country's economic growth and development is highly dependent on its school system. The main purpose of the school is to sustain individual and social improvement. The type of school structure is therefore an important factor in the overall development of any society and, as Cheru (2002) argues, schools are the foundation of human development in any society. This means that the quality of work required for social improvement is a function of the state of the country's school system. As such, schools are important in laying the foundation for socio-economic development. Managing the school system at all levels is therefore a major challenge that requires the involvement of all stakeholders.

Defining a school is not easy. UNESCO defines it as an education system that is mostly run by private entities (eg, private companies) rather than governments. The difference between public and private UNESCO definitions is based on administrative arrangements. Overlaying the funding lens, we find it more appropriate to characterize schools along a continuum rather than a dichotomy. For example, some religious schools receive both governmental and non-governmental funding. Many government-supported schools, which are prohibited from charging tuition fees, charge other usage fees (enrolment fees, exam fees, etc.). Additionally, some low-cost schools, supported by corporate interests, differ from your average low-cost school in business model, access to resources, use of technology, and political influence.

School Ownership and Its Historical Background in Nigeria

School ownership in Nigeria falls between the private and public sectors. The public sector here refers to the three levels of government – federal, state and local; refers to a group of operate kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools and/or colleges, teacher training schools, vocational schools, etc.; Schools established and operated by the government are called public schools, and schools established by individuals, groups, or missionary organizations are called private schools.

School ownership is concerned with integrating the appropriate human and material resources available and utilized to achieve the program goals of the institution. Kalagbor (2017) defined the concept as the process of identifying, mobilizing and using scarce human and material resources related to education to efficiently and effectively achieve specific educational goals. . This process involves the careful and systematic application of the methods, principles, plans and procedures necessary to achieve the goals of the school (Nwankwo in Okoroma, 2016). The term school property does not refer to a single process or operation. Nwankwoala (2016) viewed the term as a broad umbrella encompassing a series of processes such as:

Plans, coordinates, manages and participates in other management processes and contributes to policy development. To achieve these goals, the heads of educational institutions carefully plan various programs and activities. An educational institution can be a school, college, or university. The Principal works with other teachers, parents and students to organize and motivate these programs and activities, and coordinates, directs and manages staff efforts. Leaders evaluate staff performance and progress in meeting educational program objectives, provide feedback, and, where necessary, make changes to the institution's plans and programs. The entire process of realizing or achieving the school's objectives is called the school's property.

The history of school ownership in Nigeria's educational administration can be traced back to the introduction of Western education into the country in the 19th century (Odeleye, Oyelami&Odeleye, 2012). Contrasting this position was his claim that his CMS Grammar School in Lagos was founded on his June 6, 1859 (Abati, 2009). According to Abati, Nigeria did not exist when CMS Grammar School was founded. According to him, the school was established as part of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) program to develop a locally-trained elite to help promote the Christian faith. Statistics do not show the number of private secondary schools in Nigeria from 1859 to the present. And even if the list were made public, it is certain that many of them would be left out.

Private participation in Nigeria's university education began with the establishment of Madonna University on 10 May 1999 (Universities of Nigeria.com, 2011) and the accreditation of Igbinedion University on 16 May 1999 (Encomium , 2013). In the decade and a half from 1999 to the present, the number of private universities has surpassed 50. In fact, statistics show that the number of private universities in Nigeria is almost equal to the number of federal and state governments combined. There are 36 federal universities, 37 state universities and 50 private universities (Just Naira, 2014). Few countries in Nigeria do not have private universities. These universities include Salem in Kogi State, Bingham in Nasarawa State, Nigerian American University in Adamawa State, Caritas University and Enugu.

Challenges of School Ownership in Nigeria

The nature of school ownership and the purpose for which the owners established the school creates a very difficult task of making a private school suitable for research and administrative cooperation with outside agencies. For these reasons, the main challenges in managing private schools are:

- **Quality assurance:** The process of education is vital in achieving education goals. The question therefore will be, are private schools engaging in best practices in education that contribute to good performance. In other words, are private schools lending themselves to the specified state-wide standards as directed by the Ministry of Education? Beginning from establishment through operation to certification, private school ought to conform to education law of the state in order to contribute towards realizing the objectives of education in Rivers State.
- **Facilities / equipment:** In accomplishing teaching and learning, facilities/equipment are central to any learner centred education. Most Private schools especially Low Fee Payment (LFP) may not be able to afford facilities/equipment necessary for offering certain subjects in the curriculum especially in the sciences, technical and vocational areas. This also causes most of these schools to focus more on social sciences and art subjects to the detriment of a balanced curriculum as required by the educational system. The state education policy weighs in on sciences, technical and vocational education and has encouraged this over the years. Therefore, Private schools needing to operate should have equipment and facilities likely to promote emphasis areas in Rivers State Education policy.
- **Environment:** School environment is a critical factor in school operations and success. Over 70% of Private schools in Rivers State are sited in either private homes or makeshift buildings and do not have capacity for further expansion in the nearest future. The provisions of sporting facilities, library, convenience, dispensary, etc. are functions of space.
- **Funding:** Availability of funds to Private school owners is important. Most Private Schools are small in size, lacking teaching equipment and facilities and trapped in make shifts house or rented accommodation. Little Patronages, astronomical costs of accommodation retard their ability to acquire education specific environment, equipment, quality teachers, all necessary to meet set standards for the operation of schools in the state or even elsewhere. Banks hardly do business with small size schools compounding their problem in accessing loans facility (Odeleye, Oyelamin&Abike, 2012). Government of Rivers State would perhaps make possession of a given sum of funds and facility guarantee from a commercial bank, preconditions for licensing a school.
- **Condition of service/motivation:** The Private School System should evolve a platform for harmonized conditions of service that mirrors what is obtainable in the Public Secondary School. This will enable teachers in Private Schools who see their job as adhoc arrangement settle down to develop careers in such school and contribute meaningfully well to education delivery. It should also be a precondition for licensing a school.
- **Manpower development/capacity building programme:** The teaching force of any school makes a statement about the quality of the school. Teachers who are technically equipped would work towards achieving set goals of education. It is imperative that deliberate effort be part of the Private Schools' Plans in ensuring quality teaching and learning.
- **Creating board of governors' Private school owners should be compelled to create Board of Governors, when requesting for License to operate. The functions of the Board, number of meeting for a year and reporting process clearly identified and specified before Licensing is done.**
- **Merger plans Private schools' owners would need to look at the trend in the industrial Sector to see how most firms are surviving. A number of school owners can come together to discuss merging their schools in order to develop mega school, by bringing their resources together.**

Prospect of School Ownership in Nigeria

School system in Nigeria really can be improved to succeed and contribute more to realizing the goal of Education For All. Despite the avalanche of challenges facing the system, collaboration efforts between operators of School System and Government can open new vistas. This is even so as Private education providers are accepted as partners in national development. Opportunities for improvement of schoolowners abound in Nigeria. They come in the following ways:

- The population trend shows that a large market exists for Private Schools providers. As they remain active players in the education industry, parents and guardians are making informed choices of schools to send their wards or children.

- More financial institutions are available to assist with facilities and instrument.
- Schoolowners in Nigeria stand to benefit from the technical and professional expertise available in Government.
- There are International Agencies e.g., UNSECO, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community Base Organizations (CBOs) ready to collaborate with Private and Public education providers ready to lend themselves to best practices.
- The existence of a friendly industrial environment in Rivers State. ← Avalanche of education interactive fora are actively promoted by the Rivers State Government and Private education providers can be availed such opportunities.
- Private education providers can capitalize on available National and State policies on education as well as the Nigeria Roadmap for education sector to strengthen their programme base.
- Private sectors stand to benefit from state regulation of education that will in turn enhance their performance necessary for attracting large clients.

School Ownership and Community Development

Schools play an important role in building and maintaining these relationships. What happens in school has a significant impact on children's success, both in transition and academic performance thereafter, and factors such as the age at which children enter school and their perceived readiness to a large extent. (La Paro&Pianta, 2010). Schools that reach out to their families and communities and strive to build links between services and institutions are rewarded with higher levels of engagement with the school and family connections. This is especially true when previous services are linked and relationships established prior to enrollment are carried over in the new school setting (Rimm-Kaufman &Pianta 2000).

Schools exist within communities. School-community relationships influence children's transition to and continued engagement with school (Dockett& Perry, 2014). Communities with high levels of social capital³⁰ provide structural and social support to families and children during transition. This may include services such as after-school care and social networks that provide information about schools and education. Social capital is generated through the connections and connections within communities and the web of trust and shared values that underpin them.

Schools benefit their communities by hiring teachers who have no jobs and no income. This shows the sense that schools play an important role in the virtuous cycle of the region. Through the interests of students, families, teachers and other stakeholders, these individuals develop the skills and stability to help others and continue the ongoing process of community development. So why are schools so important to the development of particular communities?

- **School contributes to the stability of the community members:** You need an education to get a great job or get a good reputation with other people. It's the best way to secure a promising future as you can get a well-paying job. This will help you survive in this world without too much trouble later on.
- **It promotes equality:** With schools, all the members of the community will have a sense of equality when it comes to development. The equal opportunities that come with it help in elimination of the differences that normally exist in terms of social classes and different genders. In other words, it helps in women empowerment.'
- **It makes members of the community get a sense of self dependence and confidence:** For anyone to be able to live without necessarily having to depend on others financially, they need a good school system. Self-dependence definitely contributes to community development as it makes people wiser, and they can also make their own decisions. A good school will make it easier for you to express your views and your opinions and improves your chances of being heard and taken seriously.
- **It promotes peace and security:** With good school, members of the community are in a better position to understand the difference between right and wrong and the consequences of doing what is considered wrong. Because of that, they are less likely to get into crime or situations known to bring dispute. In addition to that, it helps people know more about their rights and responsibilities as well as the law in general.
- **It spares you from exploitation:** In a country that has rights and freedom for its citizens, there are a number who still want to infringe on their neighbours' rights. Some want to fool others and the illiterate often fall victim to this. They may be duped into entering illegal businesses, signing false documents among others because they do not possess the right schooling system to avoid it.

What Makes a Good School?

The most vital aspect of any school is the quality of teaching and learning the school has to offer to its pupils. However, pupils have their own individual difference and in order to bridge this gap, good quality teaching and learning must be backed up with strong discipline structure and pastoral team.

Pupils' attendance in school is another issue which determines their performance, pupils should attend at least 90% of the school year in order to do well. The school should have a team that maximize the attendance of pupil with the use of various strategies.

A good school should also be consistent in the application of strategies. To ensure that this take place effectively, the school should have clear written policies that all teacher and other staff must follow and abide by the rules. These activities are monitored by key personnel in the school.

Good schools have well-organized management (i.e. well managed with all management having a clear, shared vision of the future). Teaching staff, non-teaching staff and also pupils must be included in the activities of the school and they should all be provided with equal opportunity, the “vulnerable” should be supported and “the able” should be developed to raise their potentials. A good school should have a good record of results and many additional awards to its credit. Five major features of an educative school by Obanya (2014) need to be re-produced here in clusters:

Cluster One: Physical/environmental features

- a. Physical space: attractive and inviting
- b. Adequate space for in-class and out-of-class learning activities
- c. Classrooms with adequate sitting and move-around spaces
- d. Adequate lighting, ventilation, and security in classrooms and other teaching-learning spaces
- e. Classrooms & furniture that do not squeeze students

Cluster Two: Managerial/organizational features

- a. Participatory decision-making
- b. Teacher professional support
- c. Healthy school-community relationship
- d. Free information flow
- e. Team spirit prevailing
- f. Encouragement of creativity in teachers

Cluster Three: Teaching-learning facilities

- a. Quantitatively adequate
- b. Timely/current/up-to-date
- c. Closely linked to the curriculum
- d. Instigate intellectual activity in learners and teachers

Cluster Four: Learner psycho-social support systems

- a. Gender-responsive practices
- b. Special needs support services
- c. Advisory and guidance support services
- d. Special attention to student learning difficulties
- e. Practice empathy (towards learners) by all teachers

Cluster Five: Pedagogical Features

- a. General and professional education of teachers
- b. Level of experience of teachers
- c. Level of teacher knowledge of curriculum
- d. Efforts at continuing professional development by teachers
- e. Levels of creativity in teachers
- f. Teacher-classroom interaction practices
- g. Teachers' knowledge and application of assessment procedures.

QUESTIONS

What is your understanding of a school?

Who is a school owner?

What are the hazard of having a school?

What are the necessary materials needed in a school?

References

- Abati, R. (2009). Book Review: Nigeria's First Secondary Grammar School. Retrieved 16.06.2014 from www.nigeriavillagesquare.com/bookshelf/bookreviews/book-review-nigerias-first-secondary-grammarschool-by-reuben-abate.html
- Alimi, O. S. (2007). Physical Plant Maintenance Practices in the Public Secondary Schools in Akoko Zonal Education Area of Ondo State. *Ife Journal of Educational Studies*, 13(1):73-78.
- Cheru, F. (2002). *African renaissance*. London: Zed Books
- Cole, G. A. (2002). *Personnel and Human Resources Management*. London: Continuum.
- Kalagbor, L. D. (2017). *Educational administration: Principles and practices in schools*. Port Harcourt: Standout publishers.
- Fowowe S S (2019). *Choose Your Home and School Right and Learn*. Lagos : ANPEIN INC.
- La Paro K. &Pianta RC. (2000). Predicting children's competence in the early school years: A meta-analytic review. 70(4):443-484
- Nwankwoala, H. N. L. (2016). *Fundamental facts in educational administration and supervision*. Port Harcourt. Harey publications.
- Odeleye, D.A; Oyelami, O. A. (2012). Private Owners and Educational Management: Issues and Challenges (<http://www.transcampus.org.Journal>, 15/12/2012).
- Obanya P A I (2014) *Educationeering* .Nigeria : Evans Publishers .
- Philias, O. Y., &Wanjobi, W. C. (2011). Performance Determinants of Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in Mathematics of Secondary Schools in Nyamaiya Division, Kenya. *Asian Social Science*, 7 (2), 107-112.
- Rimm-Kaufman S, Pianta R. C. (2000). An ecological perspective on the transition to kindergarten: A theoretical framework to guide empirical research. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 21(5):491-511.