

Emerging Issues in Educational Planning and Management in Nigeria: Implications for Educational Evaluators

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Abstract: *This paper explores the essence, nature, and characteristics of educational planning and management in Nigeria as well as the emerging issues therein. For Nigeria to achieve the sustainable development goals by the year 2030, the professional status, vibrancy, quality, and competence of planners and managers of education in the country needs to be revived and sustained. Hence, the emerging issues affecting educational planning and management, as discussed in this paper, need urgent attention, consideration, and intervention. In all, education stakeholders are to re-evaluate, re-position and assist education planners and managers as well as the ministries/departments of planning and management in all government and non-government institutions and organizations, especially in Nigeria.*

Keyword: Educational Planning; Educational Management; Emerging Issues; Nigeria.

Introduction

Education is the key to the social, economic, political, religious, and technological development of nations and the populace therein. For the goals of education to be fully attained, there should be robust and efficient planning and management mechanisms (Akpan, 2018). Educational planning and management is the foundation of successful schools, institutions, and organizations. Attaining educational-oriented schemes is dependent upon the status and efficiency of the educational planning and management mechanisms at hand. Educational planning and management are vital for the actualization of the programmes and objectives of education in Nigeria. According to Gregory and Jegede (2021), the issues with educational planning are caused by inadequate funding, a lack of data and information, insufficient educational planners, a lack of planning materials, political influence and instability, and inadequate capacity building of educational planners in the nation. The disciplines governing the allocation and usage of educational resources within the school system have evolved through time, and include educational planning, management, human resource training, and development (Ololube, 2013).

Planning for education, according to Noun (2009), entails taking unanticipated challenges into account and formulating plans for potential solutions. It is the process of making decisions for future action with the aim of accomplishing preset objectives through the best use of limited resources, according to Longe's definition from 2003. Ololube (2009) reiterated that educational planning, in its broadest sense, is the application of logical and methodical analysis to the process of educational development in order to increase education's effectiveness and efficiency in meeting the needs and objectives of students and society at large.

Noun (2012) highlighted the motivations for educational planning to include enabling education managers to acquire economic insights into the usage of resources, which are typically limited, and ensuring that resources are distributed judiciously across various education projects and programmes; assuring logical and proper allocation of educational facilities and equipment since it processes on education through in-depth analysis; plans are made for education to ensure the internal effectiveness of the educational system. i.e., to lessen or eliminate systemic waste; to ensure that the interests of all educational stakeholders are aligned. In other words, the interests of the students, parents, and society; to facilitates the control of educational resources, provides direction for actions, and serves as the foundation for monitoring and evaluating the standards, benchmarks, and guidelines; to integrates various knowledge areas, such as economics, sociology, computer science, mathematics, and others to operationalize the planning of education; and ensure that it is relevant to social values and objectives.

In a similar vein, Chakma (2019) claims that educational planning can necessitate educational forecasting as it describes events, needs, or conditions of the future with regards to teaching and learning processes; calls for interpretation of future data on education as well as its application; serve as a means of generating relevant present and future goals, and objectives for an organisation, institution, or school; decision-making on matters that affect education; and impacts on the economy, society, and politics.

Chakma (2019) restates that educational planning principles entail a system analysis and is research based; it is a continuous process; it is peculiar to educational organizations; it is practical and realistic; planning involves continuing and active participation of all interested persons and groups in an organisation; the planning content and scope of an organisation is usually determined by individual and group needs; it employs the services of specialists; educational planning should be undergo a continuous evaluation process, while providing opportunity for modification for further action. Similarly, it also listed the characteristics of educational

planning to be: it is the choice of best alternative; requires teamwork; has both social and economic goals; cooperation; anticipation; it is a remedial measure; leads to scientific changes.

Educational planning is essential as it ensures the success of the educational institutions: educational planning is a tool for resolving relevant and vital issues in education, as well as the factors militating against its quality. It aims at improving the goals, visions, and objectives of education; it is for addressing and improving the availability of finance and other material resources needed for educational output; efficient and effective educational planning saves efforts, time, and money; it is to attract governments' support and intervention into education; and it fosters the fulfillment of educational objectives and financing.

The quality of the school, which is a reflection of the general performance of the instructors, pupils, and school administrators, is determined by the educational planning (Hénard, 2012; Ololube & Kpolovie, 2013). Educational planners regulate and determine the extent to which educational resources and duties can be distributed among individuals and groups (Chance & Williams, 2015). Moreover, planning provides members of an educational institution with direction and assistance for outputs and service delivery (McNamara, 2016).

For instance, in Nigeria, the federal government (which has the upper hand and influence over the state, and the local governments) are responsible for planning and managing the education system (NEEDS, 2014). The creation and execution of educational policies, as well as the administration and oversight of schools in their various fields, are all the responsibility of the ministries of education, particularly the federal and state ones. These ministries' primary duties include setting teacher wages, hiring, promoting, and disciplining insubordinate staff members. They also provide rules for opening new schools and train and retrain school staff (Gregory & Jegede, 2021).

On the other hand, educational management is the process of organising, planning, directing, and managing the operations of an institution while utilising both people and material resources to effectively and efficiently carry out teaching, research, and extension work tasks. It could be termed as the application of management theory and practise to the field of education or educational institutions. The practical implementation of management ideas in the disciplines of education is at the heart of educational management (Ali & Mohamed, 2017). The field of educational management spans a wide range of topics, including the background and ideas of management science, the duties and obligations of an educational manager, and the necessary managerial abilities. Usually, educational management revolves around human, physical/material, and ideation resources management. In general, the rationales for education management are for: programme planning and progress; controlling the implementing process, organising available resources; setting and ensuring organisational standards.

The characteristics of educational management according to Chakma (2019) are that it is related to each organization, institution, society, and country; and it is interconnected with other disciplines; it is an art with a humanitarian face; it is a social science since it deals with man and everything that surrounds man; it is a profession as it entails the management of activities and resources; it is a multidisciplinary subject since the concept, principles, and skills involved in educational management are related to other disciplines such as Economics, Psychology, Mathematics, Sociology, Anthropology, and so on.; it is a dynamic process as management principles are changeable with time. New policies and action are needed to adapt to these changing policies and principles; effective management is guided by specific objectives. Without management, nothing can stand the test of time; it involves a group of individuals who are aware of and wants to achieve a common goal; and is a social process that provides social benefits and responsibilities to an individual or an organisation.

Similarly, the scopes of educational management as hinted by Chakma (2019) are the allocation of both material and human resources; construction of the school curriculum; organisation of co-curricular activities; preparation of the school timetable; maintaining school and students' discipline; organization and management of school properties; budgeting, financing, evaluation and coordination functions.

To address the escalating issues with underfunding, inadequate infrastructure, inadequate teachers, overcrowding in classes, poor monitoring and supervision, poor school administration, corruption, insecurity, unstable educational policies, political interference and instability, and lack of effective planning, the Nigerian educational system needs regular and standard planning and management processes (Gregory & Jegede, 2021). Government and stakeholders' oriented and sponsored projects and intervention programmes are prematurely aborted or abandoned because of the weak or non-existing planning and management apparatus in place. According to Mgbekem, Ntukidem, and Etor (2004), the Nigerian educational system has frequently come under fire for being poorly planned and inherited from colonial masters since it does not fulfil the requirements and aspirations of the country today. Therefore, this paper x-rays the nature, characteristics, and essence of educational planning and management; and the emerging issues as regards the planning and management of education in Nigeria, with implications for educational evaluators.

In order to make decisions on the effectiveness and efficiency of such educational programmes (including how it is being planned and managed); evaluation is needed. Evaluation is a technique used to acquire reliable and valuable information about previous, ongoing, or completed educational programmes, events, or activities (Osiesi, 2020). It entails the evaluation and monitoring of educational performance and progress, assisting education policymakers and education ministries in assessing the degree to which the specified educational objectives have been met, and essential for educational planning and forecasting; for appropriate guidance and counselling services; and in enhancing learners' learning outcome, and to provide feedback on the overall performance of educational stakeholders (Osiesi, 2020). A key factor in predicting and enhancing the quality of education is educational evaluation.

It is used to assess general learning behaviours, quality, effectiveness, educational results, and elements that support or inhibit effective teaching and learning processes in both teachers and students (Osiesi, 2020).

Emerging Issues in Educational Planning and Management in Nigeria

The emerging issues militating against effective planning and management of education in Nigeria may include inexperienced and inadequate educational planners/managers, poor records and data management, political instability and interference, frequent changes in policies, poor funding of education, unavailability of planning and management tools, corruption and lack of professional development and training for education planners and managers. These are discussed below:

1. Inexperienced and inadequate educational planners/managers

Many planners and managers in the Nigerian education system are not experienced enough to effectively and efficiently plan and manage the system. At the education ministries and boards, there are few or no professional education planners and managers (even those who are there, do not possess the required competence), who would proffer solutions through effective policies, in solving major problems in education (Ololube, 2013). The absence of well-trained educational planners and managers may have hindered enhanced performance and productivity in the realm of education (Noun, 2009). It will be an advantage for Governments at all levels to recruit or redeploy well-trained and proficient educational planners and managers in their education ministries if the expected positive changes and progress are to be recorded in the sector.

2. Poor records and data management

Poor records and data management is another emerging issue preventing effective educational planning and management in Nigeria. In most cases, data on education in Nigeria is usually poorly kept and most times misplaced or misappropriated. There are shortfalls in data/records relating to the different levels of education in the country. Generating up-to-date and reliable data remains a problem in the sector (Ololube, 2013), and this has been affecting the quality and output of educational planning and management systems in the country.

3. Political instability and interference

Political instability and interference are other emerging issues affecting effective planning and management of education in Nigeria. Frequent change in governments or political office holders, results in an abrupt policy change, even when such policy is the needed transformation the sector needs at the time. These frequent changes in governments affect educational planning and management processes since the various political parties have their specific agenda and programmes. Political office holders do not allow educational planners and managers to have their way of executing educational plans, policies, and objectives, which would have benefitted the sector. Also, many of these politicians divert the resources which have been planned for the education sector, into personal use (Gbenu, 2012). The amount of resources allotted to the sector might occasionally be influenced by political conflict between various groups in the nation.

4. Frequent changes in policies

Policies are the ingredients that keep the agenda and programmes of an organization alive. However, in the Nigerian context, many a time, policies are not allowed to strive as they should. This is due to the recurrent changes in the political, social, and economic climate of the nation over time. Where and when policies are engineered for implementation, the education system therein would take a positive and progressive status.

5. Poor funding of education

Generally, the resources been allocated to the Nigerian education sector have been worrisome over the years (Ololube, 2013). Funds allocated to the education sector have been insufficient in meeting the needs and challenges confronting it. These in more ways than one, have been the problem stifling effective planning and management of education in Nigeria. Sufficient allocation of resources (in form of finance, human capital, and facilities) is paramount for the successful implementation of education programmes.

This issue of poor funding may have been worsened by the global economic recession as well as the recent outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic; as aids and grants from international organizations, which were originally allocated to education are expended on other sectors of the economy such as health, infrastructure, etc. Tools necessary for planning and management of education in Nigeria are either unavailable or in short supply. Some of these planning and management tools could include computers, calculating machines, statistical soft wares, planning/management charts and metrics; and other facilities and materials for effective planning and management concerns.

6 Corruption

Corruption in Nigeria remains a burning issue affecting every sector and structure of the nation (including the education system). Funds originally designated for education planning and management purposes are often, diverted by officials of the ministries of education, both at the federal, state, and local governments. According to Gbenu (2012), high levels of corruption and resources misappropriation is a factors militating against adequate and proper funding of education in Nigeria.

7 Lack of professional development and training for education planners and managers

Lack of professional development of educational planners and managers working in education agencies and departments at the federal, state, and local governments is a factor affecting efficient planning and management in education. Many educational planners and managements may have been allowed opportunities for further professional training or retraining programmes. This

has led to the staleness of these planners and managers. As such, they are not exposed to current, modern, and proficient strategies for planning and management.

8 Unavailability of ICT and use

There is a paucity of ICT as well as its use in many Nigerian schools, organisations, and education ministries. This has hampered the art and science of educational planning and management. This lapses actually affected the planning and management of education in the country, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

9 Lack of planning and management training institutes

In Nigeria, there is little or no special institution of planning and management where individuals are to learn and master the technicalities/formalities of educational planning and management.

10. Unavailability of planning and management tools

Tools necessary for planning and management of education in Nigeria are either unavailable or in short supply. Some of these planning and management tools could include computers, calculating machines, statistical soft wares, planning/management charts and metrics; and other facilities and materials for effective planning and management concerns.

Conclusion

Educational planning and management are a necessity for the advancement of educational programmes and objectives in Nigeria. For Nigeria to achieve the sustainable development goals, the professional status, vibrancy, quality, and competence of planners and managers of education in the country needs to be revived and sustained. Hence, the emerging issues affecting educational planning and management, as discussed in this paper, need urgent attention and consideration. In all, education stakeholders are to re-evaluate, re-position and assist education planners and managers as well as the ministries of planning and management in all government and non-government institutions and organizations, especially in Nigeria. As such, educational trained evaluators are to fully participate in the task of evaluation and recommendation making with regards to the planning and management of education in Nigeria and elsewhere.

Suggestions

1. Stakeholders in education at all levels, are to possess the political will to support education planners and managers;
2. Full and timely implementation of education policies should be ensured by all government agencies;
3. Education data should be continuously generated and made useful for planners and managers in the sector;
4. Education stakeholders should support the increased budgetary allocations of funds and resources to education;
5. Professional and capable educational planners and managers should be recruited into educational institutions and agencies;
6. Education stakeholders, especially the governments, should support and organize professional training and retraining programmes for education planners and managers;
7. Planning and management departments/units should be established in all government agencies and ministries, and were already present, should be strengthened;
8. Funds meant for the education sector should be properly appropriated into education;
9. All forms of political interference in the education sector should be discouraged.

Implications for Educational Evaluators

To ensure the efficacy and sustainability of educational planning and management in Nigeria, well trained educational evaluators should be mandated by law to regularly assess, monitor, and evaluate the extent of the implementation of educational plans, policies, and management concerns in the country; be it the primary, secondary or tertiary levels. Educational evaluators are also to provide and always furnish the ministries and boards of education at all levels with the evaluation reports regarding the state of educational planning and management in the country. This will go a long way in ensuring a vibrant and efficient educational system in Nigeria.

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