



NECESSITIES FOR QUALITY POLICY AND LEADERSHIP IN NIGERIAN EDUCATION SYSTEMS



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Abstract

In the coming together of humans as an organization or body for a reasonable purpose of impacting knowledge of divergent fields of human endeavors, requires rules and policies that are professionally managed by transitional leadership modus operandum. The problem of concern to this study is on the weakness of the policies in Nigerian Education System at all levels, ranging from daycare, nursery, primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions. It is found in this research that policies are really made, but they lack sustainable quality as it regards implementation and execution, and even the policies which in some cases sound compromised by self-centeredness. This study therefore aims at exposing the weak policies, their implementations, execution and the necessities for quality policies and leadership in Nigerian education system for a better and enviable standard. It recommends for a corroboration of the orthodox educational principles with the present education policies for a sophisticated quality educational policy in Nigeria. The research adopts evolutionist and phenomenological research approach. Materials are sourced from secondary data which include: Journals, books of readings, textbooks, etc. Data gotten are documented and referenced in APA 7th edition manual style, and are also analyzed with historical style of data analysis.

Keywords: *Necessity, Quality Policy, Leadership, and Nigerian Education System.*

Introduction

Knowledge, they say, is power. In the traditional African and Nigerian societies respectively, some people were distinguished in their high acumen in various spheres of human reasonings. Some are very knowledgeable in impacting or teaching others things in a way it will be easy to understand. Some are good in philosophical thoughts, use of proverbs, idioms, lyric, some comic reliefs, while others are wonderful in technical and craft works. Still, some perform excellently well in divergent medical specialties, et cetera. But the problem had been the inability to organize the process of acquiring this knowledge and transferring it in an orderly manner where quality policies and a formidable leadership organigram is designed to forestall abuse, negative manipulations, and inconsistencies. Recently, there are policies, ethics and rules, guiding Nigerian education systems at all stages or levels. Different states of the federation follow the national education policy in designing their own education policies. Now, the problem of the research lies on the fact that these policies lack sustainable quality since proactive deals for implementation and execution of these policies have remained in shambles. Therefore, a more quality policy or policies and principled leaderships that surpass being compromised by selfish interests have remained very pivotal to Nigerian Education Systems.

Some are offered leadership portfolios in the education sectors when they lack the qualities, and other necessary qualifications to promulgate educational policies. For example, Akpan and Isong (2019:501) have observed overloading of the curriculum thus: “It is the mere ignorance about the world of ICT that hunts educators to over flog the issue of overcrowded curriculum. An education leadership that could not for instance, be able to abort or avoid making policies that would cut of overloading of the curriculum and other dangerous applications is not worthy to be in education or academic sector. The major problem in this research precisely is that Nigeria Education Systems are weak in making quality policies and leadership. This affects every level of education or academics in Nigeria, right from Daycare, Nursery, Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Institutions. It has been found in this research, that policies made in Nigeria Education Systems in most cases lack sustainable quality and leadership prowess especially in their implementations and executions. The article purposefully wants to expose the weak policies and leadership in Nigeria Education Systems, hence advocates for the necessities for quality policies and leadership in Nigerian Education Systems for a better and viable educational cum academic standard in Nigeria. It further recommends for a corroboration of the orthodox educational principles with the present educational policies for a higher-class quality educational policy in Nigeria. The paper uses evolutionist and phenomenological research methodologies. Materials are generated from secondary sources that include: textbooks, books of readings or creative writings, journals and the internet. Data collected are documented in the text and subsidiary section in American Psychological Association (APA) 7th edition manual style. The information gotten are also analysed with historical style of data analysis.

Conceptualization of Concepts/Terms

The terms that are planned to explain in this article are: Quality policy, Leadership and Nigerian Education System. Policy has been defined by Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary (2025:8) as “a set of ideas, or a plan of what to do in a particular situation, that which have been agreed officially by a group of people, a Business organization, a Government, or a Political party”. Quality policy therefore, is a set of quality ideas, or a plan of what to do in particular situations, that have been agreed officially by a group of people, a business organization, a government, or a political party. Nigeria education sector or systems should understand the necessities of quality policies in the present condition of her Education systems.

Leadership to a common man’s view, could ordinarily mean the art of leading, maybe, a people or group of people. Summers (2001:300) has defined leadership as: “the position being the leader of a team, organization, etc. the quality of being good at leading a team, organization, country etc. All the people who lead a group, organization, the position of being in front of others in a competition”. Leadership exists in almost all spheres of human organization or group. At any time, more than one person come together as a body, Leadership becomes essential, otherwise the body or organization lacks orderliness. In some cases, leadership emerges as a result of a formal contest (election) or appointment or by virtue of one’s position in a system or by birth especially in family, kindred or communal settings. Quality leadership in other words deals with the quality of being good at leading a team, organization, country etc.

Education on the other hand, in this context goes beyond ordinary conversations in where ideas and knowledge are shared. Bamisaye (2014:233) posits education in Nigeria to be as a sound investment that is expected to enhance the economic growth of individuals in Nigeria. Okigbo (2020:167) defines education as an investment in human capital which has become a matter of priority for both government and individuals. Then Nigeria Education System would read, the system in which education in Nigeria is concerned as an investment in human capital which has become a matter of priority for both government and individuals. Education is meant to broadens one’s horizon, to help in stimulating ones thought and feelings, and to also help one become a useful member of the society. Education is beyond academic excellence.it encompasses both character and learning.



Barriers Against Quality Policies and Leadership in Nigeria Education Systems.

The barriers against securing quality policies and leadership in Nigeria Education systems that are streamlined to be elaborated on in this paper include: Nepotism, Ethnicity, Religion, Materialism, Nigeria zoning saga, low passion for expertise, skills, and lack of interest to incorporate Traditional and Nigerian Cultural education system. Let us take them one after the other.

Nepotism has been a cankerworm eating the fabrics of most parts of Nigerians spheres of wellbeing. People in positions of political powers and authority or influence have laid it as a culture in Nigeria, to use public offices to get good positions or jobs unfairly to the advantages of members of their own families not minding their inabilities or incapacities of the service delivery. Education sector suffers this menace both in public and private education institutions, parastatals, committees, Boards, Commissions Departments, or Ministry. Akah (2018:26) buttresses thus:

...recruitment into public leadership could be better in the sense that it will be subjected to closer scrutiny for reputation, character and track record, as against that current practice where persons with dubious reputations and questionable character among their own people are chosen into high national office as leaders – presumably on behalf of their regions or localities by a distant central government which knows relatively little about the poor or low character reputation of such appointees among their own people. With the result that when they enter into such appointive positions, they aim not to develop God given resources of their local areas or add to the wealth of their communities, but instead to feed on and loot the allocations from the center. In Nigeria, nepotism flies. People are appointed to offices without considering their characters and reputation. What is considered most is, he or she is my brother, sister, aunty, uncle, son, daughter, friend or extended family member. This is part of the obstacles hindering achieving quality policies and leadership in Nigeria Education Systems because some of those in power consider their own people more in appointment into education policy making and leadership than credibility.

More so, ethnicity and religion are two sides of one sword cutting down the need for quality policy and leadership in Nigerian Education Systems. Adama and Okafor (2018:52) points, “there is always discrimination among ethnic groups in Nigeria when it comes to sharing things. Some Igbos or Yoruba feel they are more Igbo or Yoruba than other”. It is very common in Nigeria than when a Yoruba is in authority most offices are occupied by the Yoruba, so it is to the Igbo, Hausa, Fulani, etc. Religion is also a factor.

Okafor and Adama (2018:60 – 61) stress that

...Christianity, in its own way, also contributed to this problem on its own by introducing denominational tendencies, which threatened the communitarian ideas that existed in the traditional setup. Today, in Nigeria, denominational tendencies have dominated most Christians relationships with Nigerians, even among fellow Christians. Islamic religion, on its own, came up with similar teachings, only accommodating her converts as one. In that regard, other non – Muslims are not seen as being worthy of wielding political power...

In Nigeria, in most cases, after considering ethnic affiliation in distribution of appointment and sharing of resources, next thing that comes into play, is religion and religious denominations. This psychology



really affects the education system as a matter of making quality policies and leaderships. When capacity is not offered required priority, anything goes in the system.

Materialism remains a consistent barrier to building quality policies and leaderships in the Nigerian Education Systems – Igbo and Anugwom (2002:71) state that; “British colonial rule introduced “money economy” in place of “barter” ... “This money economy introduced by the British colonialists, has automatically, corrupted Nigerian people for indiscriminate quest for money. It has made people in the education sector to always place money in the discharge of their duties. It has made the policy makers in the education sector to front policies and leadership systems in education, that creates room for personal financial enrichments which has accumulated into corrupt practices like embezzlement of funds, misappropriation of funds and other material-oriented criminalities in the Nigeria education systems.

Nigeria zoning saga is another menace to quality policy making and leadership in Education System. This is tried to be explained here, with the concept of representative government. Nwankwo (1992:51) defines a representative government as: “the type of government where the citizens or electorate are allowed to elect their leaders i.e representatives. It is an indirect form of democracy”. This is close to the zoning formulae in Nigeria politics and the Federal Character Commission principles. In trying to distribute offices round every state, local government, or district, the person at the top, may be the President of the country, governor of the state, head of board, commission, council, etc may know or not know people of high capacities from every quarter as recommended by the Federal Character Commission, will be handicapped in appointing proficient hands in different managerial offices in the education sectors, thereby causing harm to the promulgation of quality education policies, and at the same time, adversely, affecting capable leaders in different parts of education systems.

Nevertheless, there is low passion for expertise, skills and lack of interest to incorporate traditional as well as Nigerian cultural education systems. Young Nigerian these days have formed the slogan that: education cum academics is scam. Most of them are no longer interested in building up academic or education skills in any area of expertise. Those who are willing are carried by Western cultural and civilization: - Therefore, required interest is lacking in making policies that will accommodate substantially, Nigerian peoples traditional and cultural education systems. Akulue (2013:101) avers that, “In addition to low levels of living, relatively low levels of labour productivity characterize most underdeveloped countries”. Nigeria is amongst the underdeveloped countries. One of the reasons is because of low productivity. If Nigerians of today have developed the interest of building skills and expertise on developing both human, natural, and other material resources in all levels of education systems, our standard of living would have grown with high level of productivity just like most Asian countries. Nigerian education policy makers and leaders have not found values in making policies with serious interest in developing graduates that will grow Nigeria traditional and cultural technical know – how in local advancements in building or structural techniques, refine local products in agriculture to an enviable international standard, develop our local crafts, tourist centers and cultural outfits, etc.

On the other side of the coin, Onyibo (2013:2) identifies anti – culture practices as: murder, abortion, pre-marital pregnancy, selling human beings, marrying biological relation...homosexuality, stealing, keeping stolen goods...if these cultural values are inculcated in Nigeria learners from daycare, nursery, primary, secondary and tertiary levels with link to their traditional and cultural consequences or penalties, the abnormal and anti – education lives found among young people in Nigeria will be drastically reduced, thereby encouraging the zeal for industrialization and high moral consciousness.

Why Quality Policy and Leadership is Necessary in Nigeria Education Systems

The necessities of quality policy and leadership in Nigeria education systems covers every sphere of human wellbeing. It touches social, religious, political, health and economic growth and development of the country as a whole. With quality policies and quality leadership in Nigeria education systems where every unit of quality and valuable knowledge is acknowledged and welcomed, be it Western or traditional in a well refined manner, Nigeria can start producing selfless politicians,

sound social orientations, standard economic growth and development, reliable health personnel and facilities, enviable religious Institutions, world recognized placement and high academic and educational rating et cetera. Let us take them one after the other accordingly on the following spheres: social, religions, political, health and economic spheres.

On the social grounds, taking academic or education for instance, it has been noted by scholars that much difficulties are faced in teaching and learning English language as a second language even in the university system. Obera (2023:37) emphasizes thus:

One of the aspects in teaching and learning of English is poor linguistic foundation of the students. The English language learners in the universities have poor foundation as far as the use of English is concerned. about 81% of Kaduna State students had their first English lesson at school. Most of these students are not exposed to the standard varieties and the basic grammatical structures at their early learning stage. As we all know that English language is Nigeria lingua franca, in which religious, other social, economic, political, health and other undertakings of humans in Nigeria are communicated, standard and quality policies and leadership managing the education systems will deploy sophisticated measure to catch all and sundry young in Nigeria to a very high standard of English language usage. This will lift Nigeria high to a world class recognition if it is well achieved. Quality policies and leadership in education system can promote both social and economic development of Nigeria. Abayomi et al (2014:17) posit that:

Physics education students of the University of Ilorin offered workshop practice as a course where students put into practice the theories learnt about diode, capacitors, electricity, resistors, series and parallel connections of wire, into construction of electronics projects which enabled them to be self-reliant and productive force after graduation from university. This is to equip the students with necessary skills that will unlock their economic potentials and enable them to participate and benefit from their national economy as well as facilitate the economic development of the nation. Quality policies and leadership would develop policies that will restructure all levels of education system in Nigeria to encourage entrepreneurial skills that can help develop incorporated skills of both traditional craft and modern education skills in students from their early ages to the tertiary stage which will enhance social and economic growth and development in the nation.

On the religious, political and health realms, quality policies and leadership could help to train the religious who are professionals in different skills, and not dependent on religious vocations and keep hoping to earn living from the congregations, thereby preaching materialism. On the political sphere, it can help to develop politicians with national interest not self-centered interest. On the health welfare, it will assist to the development of individuals or specialists who transform Nigeria traditional health techniques to be applied interchangeably with modern health care delivery.

Conclusion and Recommendations.

National Policy on Education in Nigeria, really comes up with some education policies in intervals. But the problem is, following those good policies under the leadership of Nigeria government and education systems to the latter. Some leaders in the education sector sometimes come up with no policy, some come with inappropriate policies. Therefore, this paper recommends as follows:

1. Nigeria leaders in education policy making should be religious in promulgating policies for the benefit of all Nigerians.
2. Learners should be introduced to developing Nigerian local contents alongside the Western educational ideas.
3. Entrepreneurial skills should be encouraged from early stage of every child as an alternative to theoretical knowledge.
4. Proficiency should be considered a priority in appointing educational leaders.
5. Nigerian political leaders should make education affordable for Nigerians.



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