

CONSTRAINTS TO EDUCATIONAL GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT AND WAY FORWARD IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Education can be informal, non-formal, and formal in nature. When it is informal, it is organized on individual, family or community level and does not involve a curriculum, formal teaching and learning. Non-formal education consists of functional literacy, remedial, and continuing education outside the formal school system. It is the out of school education with no defined age group, rules and regulations, syllabus, certified public examination, and regular certificate. Formal education is acquired in educational institutions, which can be at primary, secondary or tertiary level. In the case of education in Nigeria, it can be likened to a seed that falls among thorns on the soil, such that when it germinates and continues to grow, the growth is abnormal to the extent that it cannot bear good fruits. Since the advent of western education in Nigeria in 1842, all has not been well with it. It has been facing many crises which have not been allowing it to develop. In this paper, the constraints to education development in Nigeria such as: inadequate access to schools, inadequate funding, inadequate and decay infrastructural facilities, inadequate, low quality and non commitment of teachers, poor academic performance of pupils and students, inappropriate curriculum, corruption, among others were examined. To reposition and move the education forward, government, educational institutions' administrators, students, parents, and other stakeholders in education have roles to play. In particular, government needs to allocate more fund to education sector, recruit qualified teachers to curb the present shortage in schools, improve teachers' welfare, train and retrain teachers so that they can cope with new challenges, provide adequate infrastructural facilities in schools, curb corruption as well as examination malpractices.

Keywords: constraint, educational, growth, development and way forward.

Introduction

Education is widely recognized as a fundamental instrument for national development and individual transformation. It serves as a powerful tool for

developing intellectual capacity, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for personal growth and societal advancement. Through education, individuals acquire knowledge and competencies that enable them to participate effectively in economic, political, and social activities. It also helps in identifying and nurturing hidden talents, thereby empowering individuals to contribute meaningfully to national growth and global competitiveness.

Education remains the most reliable means of eliminating illiteracy and promoting enlightenment in any society. Illiteracy limits access to information, reduces productivity, and hinders national progress. Conversely, a well-educated population enhances innovation, productivity, and social cohesion. Education promotes critical thinking, informed decision-making, and adaptability to technological and societal changes, thereby fostering responsible citizenship and sustainable development.

The importance of education to both individual and societal development cannot be overemphasized. It improves employment opportunities, increases income levels, and promotes self-reliance. At the national level, education facilitates human capital development, technological advancement, and economic growth. In Nigeria, despite its recognized importance, the education sector still faces numerous challenges that must be addressed to achieve sustainable development and national transformation.

CONSTRAINTS TO EDUCATIONAL GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT

One of the major constraints to educational growth and development in Nigeria is the instability of teaching staff, particularly in primary and secondary schools. The issue is not merely the unavailability of teachers but the frequent movement and inconsistency among those already in the system. Many teachers leave the profession due to poor conditions of service, low remuneration, lack of job security, and limited opportunities for career

advancement. As a result, schools experience high turnover of teachers, which disrupts the teaching and learning process. In many public schools, National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members are often relied upon as teachers, and once their service year ends, they leave, creating gaps that affect continuity in instruction. This instability has significantly weakened the quality of education and students' academic performance.

The quality of education in any nation is closely linked to its level of national development. Unfortunately, the decline in the standard of education in Nigeria has become alarming. Although Nigeria operates a federal system of government where educational responsibilities are shared among federal, state, and local governments, there is often a lack of coordination and clarity in roles. This overlap in responsibilities has created administrative and funding challenges, especially at the basic education level, where control is not fully centralized. Consequently, disparities exist in the quality of education across different states depending on their financial capacity and commitment to educational development.

Another major constraint is political interference in the education sector. In many instances, educational institutions are established based on political considerations rather than genuine academic needs. Admissions into higher institutions are sometimes influenced by political connections instead of merit. Parents and influential individuals often use their positions to secure admission or academic advantages for their children, thereby undermining the credibility of the education system.

Examination malpractice is also a serious problem affecting educational growth and development in Nigeria. Poor preparation of students, inadequate teaching facilities, and the high cost of education often push students and parents to seek shortcuts to academic success. In some cases, teachers and school officials are involved in malpractice by collecting illegal fees to assist

students during examinations. This practice has greatly reduced the quality and credibility of educational outcomes in the country.

Poor funding remains another critical challenge. The education sector in Nigeria suffers from chronic underfunding, leading to inadequate infrastructure, insufficient instructional materials, and poor maintenance of existing facilities. Many schools operate in dilapidated buildings without functional libraries, laboratories, or modern teaching aids. Overcrowded classrooms and inadequate facilities create uncondusive learning environments that hinder effective teaching and learning.

Furthermore, the shortage of qualified teachers in some subject areas has resulted in teachers handling multiple subjects outside their areas of specialization. For instance, a school may have an English teacher but lack a Mathematics or Science teacher, forcing available teachers to teach subjects they are not professionally trained to handle. This imbalance contributes to poor academic performance and the practice of mass promotion, where students are advanced without adequate mastery of subjects.

In addition, poor welfare and motivation among teachers have negatively affected their commitment to duty. Some teachers engage in petty trading during school hours to supplement their income due to inadequate salaries. This reduces the time and attention devoted to teaching and ultimately affects students' learning outcomes.

In conclusion, the challenges facing educational growth and development in Nigeria are numerous and multifaceted. They include teacher instability, poor funding, political interference, corruption, examination malpractice, inadequate infrastructure, and weak administrative coordination. Addressing these constraints requires comprehensive reforms and the collective efforts of government, educational administrators, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders. Only through such collaborative efforts can the Nigerian

education system be revitalized to meet the demands of national development.

Educational Growth

Educational growth refers to the progressive development of learners in physical, mental, social, and emotional dimensions through the process of education. According to Sultan (2008), growth begins from the early stages of human life and involves continuous changes in the human body and mind. Growth is largely quantitative in nature and can be observed through structural and physiological changes such as increase in height, weight, and body structure. These changes occur gradually and systematically as individuals mature over time. In the educational context, growth is essential because it provides the foundation upon which learning and development take place.

Development, on the other hand, is a qualitative process that accompanies growth. It involves progressive and orderly changes in behaviour, abilities, and skills resulting from maturation and experience. Development enables individuals to acquire new competencies such as movement, communication, reasoning, and social interaction. Educational growth therefore encompasses both physical and psychological changes that occur as learners interact with their environment and educational experiences.

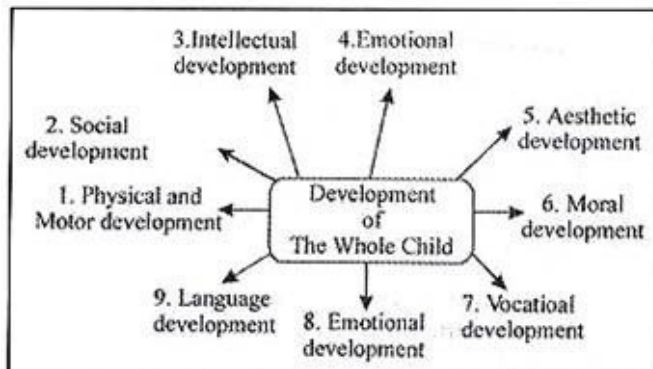
Physical growth and development involve changes in body structure and functioning. Proper nutrition, a conducive home environment, and access to healthcare significantly influence a child's physical development. Healthy physical growth enhances learners' ability to participate actively in school activities. Social growth and development enable children to understand societal norms, values, and acceptable behaviours, thereby helping them become responsible members of society.

Emotional development involves the gradual shaping of a child's feelings, attitudes, and personality. A supportive environment helps children manage emotions effectively and build positive relationships. Mental development refers to the growth of cognitive abilities such as thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving. This development begins at birth and continues throughout life, influencing academic performance and overall intellectual capacity.

Early childhood represents a critical stage of rapid growth and development across all domains. During this stage, children depend heavily on parents and caregivers while developing foundational skills. As they progress into later childhood or boyhood, they become more socially interactive, emotionally aware, and mentally active. Providing supportive learning environments and engaging children in meaningful educational activities during these stages enhances their overall growth and prepares them for future academic and social responsibilities.

Educational Implications of Growth and Development

Nwagu (2010), education is not only a process and a product of growing, it means growing. It aims at the fullest possible realisation of all the potentialities of children. This implies that teachers and parents must know what children are capable of and what potentialities they possess. Equipped with this knowledge they should provide suitable opportunities and favourable environmental facilities which are conducive to the maximum growth of children. Apart from these opportunities, it is necessary that their attitudes are helpful, encouraging and sympathetic.



Source: Nwagu

2. School programmers, procedures and practices should be adjusted to the growth and maturational levels of children, bearing in mind the individual variations in rates of growth. Since various aspects of growth are interrelated, parents and teachers should pay attention to all aspects. Good physical growth, for example, through the provision of play, games and sports, is conducive to effective intellectual development; malnutrition has been found to be an important factor that retards development: hence, teachers and parents should cooperate in cultivating among pupils habits of balanced eating (Taiwo, 2001).

3. The principles of development have highlighted the importance of "individual differences" from one child to the other and from one stage to another. This fact justifies the provision of diversified courses for the development of specific talents, abilities and interests and a rich and varied programme of co-curricular activities. Similarly, the curricular activities should be based on the needs and interests of various stages of growth i.e., childhood, boyhood or later childhood, pre- adolescence and adolescence.

4. Each stage of growth has its possibilities and limitations. This implies that teachers and parents should not demand of pupils or children what is beyond their stage of growth. If they do so, they will only cause frustrations, heighten

tension and nervousness in children. For example, it is wrong to expect a primary school child to appreciate abstract concepts and theories.

5. The 'inter-relatedness of growth' demands presentation of knowledge in an interrelated manner and its integration with action. Since each child grows in his own unique way, it is but opposite that parents and teachers should treat each child as a unique individual and provide for this special needs and interests.

Educational Development

Educational development is a dynamic and evolving field concerned with improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning in educational institutions. It is broadly defined as the process of helping colleges and universities function effectively as teaching and learning communities (Felten, Kalish, Pingree, & Plank, 2007). It also refers to actions aimed at enhancing teaching and learning outcomes (Amundsen & Wilson, 2012) and is regarded as a key mechanism for ensuring institutional quality and promoting positive institutional change (Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy, & Beach, 2005). Educational development is therefore an inclusive concept that encompasses several subfields such as instructional development and organizational development, all of which are directed toward improving educational effectiveness and efficiency.

Instructional development focuses on improving teaching, curriculum, and student learning outcomes within educational institutions. According to Ajeyalemi (2009), instructional development emphasizes course design, curriculum structure, and effective teaching strategies. In this approach, teachers collaborate with instructional design specialists to redesign courses and adopt appropriate teaching methods that enhance learning. Instructional development programmes also examine how individual courses fit into the broader institutional curriculum and assist in defining instructional goals that

maximize student learning. They further evaluate course effectiveness, support the integration of educational technologies, and develop learning materials. Many instructional development initiatives include training for teachers and teaching assistants through workshops on course design, innovative teaching methods, and the use of modern educational technologies. The underlying philosophy is that collaborative efforts among institutional members lead to the design of effective courses that promote meaningful learning experiences.

Organizational development represents another dimension of educational development that focuses on improving the overall structure and functioning of educational institutions. Peter and Isaac (2013) noted that organizational development aims to build efficient and effective institutional structures that support teaching and learning processes. It involves large-scale institutional reforms such as curriculum enhancement, assessment practices, and the establishment of learning goals that align with institutional objectives. Organizational development also emphasizes leadership development among faculty and administrators by providing training for department heads, deans, and other educational leaders. Such training equips them with the skills needed to formulate policies that influence teaching quality, staff recruitment, promotion, and student outcomes. Through institutional change, personnel development, and leadership capacity building, organizational development contributes significantly to improving educational practices and institutional effectiveness.

Despite its importance, educational growth and development in Nigeria face numerous constraints. Press (2010) identified poor governance and management as a major challenge affecting the education sector. Government commitment to addressing educational problems, particularly quality issues, is often inadequate. Poor funding and neglect of the education sector also hinder development. UNESCO recommends allocating about 26%

of national budgets to education, but Nigeria's budgetary allocation has consistently fallen below this benchmark, resulting in insufficient resources for effective educational delivery. Corruption further exacerbates these challenges by diverting funds meant for educational infrastructure, staff salaries, and school maintenance.

In addition, poor infrastructure and inadequate training facilities negatively affect teaching and learning in Nigerian schools. Many institutions lack adequate classrooms, laboratories, and instructional materials, making education more theoretical than practical. Poor teachers' welfare, characterized by low salaries and irregular payment, reduces teachers' motivation and commitment to their profession. This often leads to low dedication among teachers and a shortage of qualified and competent personnel in the education sector. Furthermore, the high rate of examination malpractice undermines the quality and credibility of the Nigerian education system. Addressing these constraints is essential for achieving sustainable educational growth and development in Nigeria.

Theoretical Frame Work

The Systems Theory (Input-Output Model)

The theory adopted for this study is derived from the Systems Theory Input-Output model developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy and further elaborated by Weihrich (1988). This theory postulates that an organized enterprise does not exist in isolation; rather, it depends on its environment for survival and growth. According to the theory, organizations receive inputs from their environment, transform these inputs through internal processes, and produce outputs that are returned to the environment. The effectiveness of any organization therefore depends on how efficiently it manages and transforms its inputs into meaningful outputs.

As applied to the educational system, students represent the major inputs. They are admitted into schools with diverse intellectual abilities, socio-economic backgrounds, and prior educational experiences. Once admitted into the school system, these students are processed through structured teaching and learning activities. The school utilizes both human and material resources—such as teachers, instructional materials, facilities, and administrative support—to facilitate this transformation process. These resources and environmental variables significantly influence the quality of learning and the eventual output of the educational system.

The output in this context is measured primarily in terms of students' academic performance, skills acquisition, and overall development. Ogunu (2000) emphasized that organizations function as absorbers, processors, and generators, consisting of interdependent variables that must work together effectively. A change in one component of the educational system inevitably affects other components. Therefore, for the educational system to achieve its desired objectives, the inputs, transformation processes, and outputs must function harmoniously. Salem further observed that all components of a system must work together in harmony to achieve the overall goals of the system. Consequently, schools with adequate facilities, qualified teachers, and supportive learning environments are more likely to produce students with high academic performance and positive learning outcomes.

The Way Forward for Educational Growth and Development

The revitalization of educational growth and development in Nigeria requires a comprehensive and committed approach from all stakeholders, particularly the government. Yekini (2013) asserted that the first step toward improving the educational system lies in strong governmental commitment to restructuring and revitalizing the sector. Governments at all levels must prioritize education by providing adequate funding, effective management, and policies that promote quality and competitiveness in the global

educational landscape. Increased funding should be directed toward the renovation of schools, provision of modern instructional facilities, research development, and improved teachers' welfare.

Furthermore, corruption within educational ministries and regulatory bodies must be decisively addressed. Funds allocated to education must be properly managed and utilized for their intended purposes. Examination malpractice, which undermines the credibility of the educational system, should be tackled through collaborative efforts between government agencies and examination bodies. The school curriculum also requires periodic review to ensure that it is practical, relevant, and aligned with current global trends in education and technology.

Improving teachers' welfare is another crucial step toward enhancing educational development. Teachers' salaries should be reviewed upward and paid regularly to motivate them and improve their level of commitment. Adequate remuneration and professional development opportunities will attract qualified and dedicated individuals into the teaching profession. In addition, continuous training and retraining of teachers using modern instructional methods and technologies will improve the quality of teaching and learning. Proper recruitment and screening processes should also be implemented to ensure that only qualified and competent teachers are employed in schools.

Conclusion

Education is both a process and a product of growth and development, as it aims at the full realization of the potential of individuals and society. It focuses on nurturing the intellectual, social, and emotional capacities of learners to enable them to contribute meaningfully to national development. For this objective to be achieved, teachers, parents, and educational stakeholders must understand the abilities and potential of students and

provide supportive learning environments that encourage growth and development.

A conducive educational environment, characterized by adequate facilities, effective teaching, and supportive attitudes, will enhance the development of students and improve the overall quality of education. Meaningful transformation in the Nigerian education system will occur when leaders and stakeholders recognize the importance of quality education and commit themselves to its improvement. The future of national development depends largely on the quality of education provided to citizens, making it imperative for all stakeholders to work collectively toward sustainable educational growth and development in Nigeria.

Suggestions

1. Government should ensure contents of vocational education of Universal Basic Education in business studies in such away students know the accounting aspects of it.
2. Ministry of education should set out a committee that will supervise all the Universal Basic Education in order to ensure that students made their local craft by themselves for the development of the education.
3. Government should increases budgetary allocation to improve workability of the school system.

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