



Creative Quality of Educational Managers in Functional Education as a Panacea to Achieving Sustainable Development in Anambra State, Nigeria

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigated creative quality of educational managers in functional education as a panacea to achieving sustainable development in Anambra State, Nigeria. Three research questions were answered and a null hypothesis tested. The population was all the principals in Public secondary schools in Anambra State. Two hundred male and female principals were sampled for the study. A self-developed structured questionnaire titled Creative Quality of Educational Managers in Functional Education as a panacea to Achieving Sustainable Development Questionnaire (CQEMFEPDQ)¹ was used for data collection. Data were analysed with mean and t-test at .05 alpha. Major findings of the study included Education system, variables for the absence of creative and quality Educational Managers and strategies towards ensuring the prevalence of creative and quality Educational Managers in Nigeria's Educational Sector. The conclusion of the study was that without creative and quality educational managers, the chances of achieving sustainable National development will be very slim, if not non-existent. Based on the findings, it was concluded that government should completely overhaul the system of appointing educational managers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is central to human development and no society can afford to neglect it without certain grave consequences in political, social and economic spheres. Perhaps, this prompted Ukeje [1] to state that education is power, and it is a process of acquiring knowledge and ideas that shape and condition man's attitude, actions and achievements. He explained that it is a process of developing the child's moral, physical, emotional and intellectual power for his contributions in social reform. According to Ukeje [1], education is the process of mastering the laws of nature and for utilizing them effectively for the welfare of the individual and for social reconstruction by virtue of education being the art of the utilization of knowledge for complete living. In the same vein, Gainee [2] observed that education is chiefly instrumental in preparing the way for the development of science and technology which has brought about phenomenal changes in every aspect of man's life. According to him, Education can initiate social changes by bringing about a change in outcome and attitude of man. Furthermore, he asserted that education is one of the most important means to improve personal endowments, build capabilities, overcome constraints and in the process enlarge available set of opportunities and choices for a sustained improvement in the well being of man. This leads to the condition under which education can accomplish these laudable goals in man's existence.

Functional education is the key to fully realising the goals of education at all levels namely tertiary, secondary and primary. Adewale [3] contended that it is a wholistic and educational experience that is focused on the identification of situational problems, gathering of information to make decisions in a world of challenges and realities of life, enhancing users and end-users to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes to showcase new concepts as a vehicle of globalizing such countries or state for meaningful co-existence, sustainability and developments. Functional education, according to Udoh and Akpan [4] should be capable of producing Nigerians who can manufacture from raw materials machines and tools needed for local and international markets, invent new designs, discover drugs capable of curing diseases hitherto incurable and transform the nation from

consumption to a manufacturing status. To achieve functional education in Nigeria, there is an urgent need of creative and quality educational managers capable of taking Nigeria to the next level in the quest for sustainable national development.

Creative and quality educational managers are those selected on merit and armed with the requisite experience, zeal, know-how or expertise to carry out their onerous job of ensuring that goals of education are realised. At the secondary education level, the need for such managers cannot be over-stressed for obvious reasons. The National Policy on Education, (N.P.E., 2013) stipulated that the cardinal aims of secondary education are two-pronged namely – preparation for higher education and preparation for useful living in the society. There are other specific aims tailored towards overall development of the country from different perspectives – social, economic and political. Based on this, capable managers are needed to actualise the goals of education. Commenting on this, Mastron [5] observed that attributes expected in such managers include prevalence of inventiveness, dynamism, flexibility, imagination, achievements, originality, adaptability, self-esteem and skills acquisition. At the secondary school level, principals are at the helm of affairs and their ability to be creative will go a long way in ensuring sustainable National development.

Kundan in Ugoh [6] described sustainable development as a construct, which envisions development as meeting the need of the present generation without compromising the needs of the future generation. According to him, it implies that while education meets the need of the present, it does not compromise the ability of the future generations to meet own needs. However, he maintained that this ability to meet the needs is determined by human capital (through education, technological advance) and through physical capital (machines, tools). According to Kundan in Ugoh (2008) continued sustainable development is only possible or assured when it is agreed and indeed concrete steps are taken to raise the level of literacy and numeracy in any society. Further, Nigeria Study/Action Team (NEST, 1991) in Osuji [7] defined sustainable development as an approach that combines the development needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability of the future while also maintaining ecological integrity.

He explained that it is a developmental process that is equitable and sensitive to ecological and environmental issues. According to him, it depends on the initiative, resourcefulness and discipline of human beings who are the managers of developmental programmes. The focus of this study is to investigate Creative Quality of Educational Managers in Functional Education as a Panacea to Achieving Sustainable Development in Anambra State.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Nigeria's educational system had never been so vilified by critics whose unrelenting attacks in the media seem to suggest that all is far from being well with the system. Words like "malfunctional", "dysfunctional", "defective", "shallow" had been used to describe the system. Prevalence of high unemployment and crime rates, cultism, examination malpractice, corruption, inflation among others seem to justify rather than debunk the negative picture being painted about the educational system. Accusing fingers are pointing at different directions as to the lamentable state of the system. Educational management is not left out as it has come under the microscope with some relevant and thought-provoking questions – Are the current crop of educational managers qualified for the job? How were they selected? What strategies do they need to adopt in order to take the educational system to the next level? As these questions beg urgent answers, the problem of this study is to examine creative quality of educational managers in functional education as a panacea to achieving sustainable National development.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Generally, the purpose of this study is to investigate creative quality of educational managers in functional education as a panacea to achieving sustainable national development. Specifically, the objectives of this study are to:

1. Determine factors that contribute to Nigeria's poor education system.
2. Identify variables that contribute to the absence of creative and quality educational managers in Nigeria's education sector.
3. Establish strategies towards ensuring the prevalence of creative and quality educational managers in Nigeria's education sector.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be of immense benefit to teachers, principals and government. Data generated from factors that lead to Nigeria's poor education system will benefit every stakeholder to education. But, teachers will specifically learn much from them and this knowledge will help them to re- assess their approach for better results. It is said that no education system can be above the quality of its teachers.

Secondary school principals will specifically gain from data generated from the present study will help to recognise their weak points and strive to improve themselves professionally in order to escape scathing criticisms from all angles.

The government at all levels not left out as regards the points already addressed above but particularly as it affects strategies towards ensuring prevalence of creative and quality educational managers in our education sector.

Data generated here will help them to project accurately as regards future budgets, proposals and projects. They will be steered towards the right direction for better outcomes as regards using education to achieve sustainable national development.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the factors that contribute to Nigeria's poor education system?
2. What are the factors that contribute to the absence of creative and quality educational managers in Nigeria's education sector?
3. What are the strategies for ensuring the prevalence of creative and quality educational managers in Nigeria's education sector?

1.5 Hypotheses

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on the strategies for ensuring the prevalence of creative and quality educational managers in Nigeria's education sector.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study was conducted in Anambra State, Nigeria, it was delimited to creative quality of educational managers in functional education as a panacea to achieving sustainable national development. It covered factors that contribute to Nigeria's poor educational system sector and strategies towards ensuring the prevalence of creative educational managers in Nigeria's Education Sector.

2. METHODS

Descriptive survey design was used for the research. Azubuike [8] asserted that this type of design examines people's opinions, motivations, interests, and perceptions on a subject through the use of questionnaire or interview. As such, survey design was considered most suitable for the study.

The population of the study consisted of 251 principals in public secondary schools in Anambra State. There are six education Zones in Anambra State namely Aguata, Awka, Ogidi, Onitsha, Otuocho and Nnewi. Out of this number, 200 (100 males and 100 females) were selected for the study.

Stratified sample method was used to ensure that zone were represented. This agreed with the contraction of Berg and Gall (2014) that stratified sampling method was used to ensure that certain sub-groups in the population were represented.

A self-developed structured questionnaire captioned, 'Creative Quality of Educational Managers in Functional Education as a panacea to achieving Sustainable Development Questionnaire (CQEMFEPDQ)' was used for data collection. It consisted of 21 items spread over three sections. It was validated by three senior lecturers whose informed opinions were elicited. They were staff of Faculty of Education, Departments of Educational Management and Planning, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Measurement and Evaluation, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbaram Campus. Cronbach alpha formula was used to analyse the data collected for reliability. A reliability score of .81 was obtained and considered reliable for the study. Hundred percent of the 200 copies of questionnaire administered through on- the-spot method of administration were properly completed and retrieved.

On techniques for data analysis, the research questions were analysed using the mean and standard deviation. The null hypothesis was tested using t-test. Items that attracted a mean rating of 2.50 and above were accepted and those below the cut-off point were rejected. The t-test was used at .05 level of significance at 198 degree of freedom in testing the hypothesis for the study. The null hypothesis was not rejected if the calculated t-value was less than the table value and was not rejected if the calculated t-value was equal or greater than the table value.

3. RESULTS

Response Key

Strongly Agreed (SA) - 4points
Agreed (A) - 3points
Disagreed (D) - 2 points
Strongly Disagreed (SD) - 1 point

Research Question 1: What are the factors that contribute to Nigeria's poor education system?

The data in Table 1 revealed the respondents' consensus that these are factors that contribute to Nigeria's poor education system. This was as a result of high agreement rate among the respondents on the seven items presented to them.

Research Question 2: What are the variables that contribute to the absence of creative and quality educational managers in Nigeria's education sector?

The data in Table 2 showed homogeneity in responses among respondents as regards variables that contribute to the absence of creative and quality educational managers in Nigeria's education Sector. This was as a result of high agreement rate among the respondents on the seven items presented to them.

Research Question 3: What are the strategies towards ensuring the prevalence of creative and quality Educational Managers in Nigeria's Education Sector?

The data in Table 3 showed uniformity in responses among respondents as regards strategies towards ensuring that prevalence of creative and quality educational managers in Nigeria's education sector. This was due to the high agreement rate among the respondents on the seven items presented to them.

Table 1. Mean ratings of respondents on factors that contribute to Nigeria's poor education system

S/N	Item description	Male principals		Female principals		Remarks
		X	SD	X	SD	
1.	Poor funding, contributes to Nigeria's poor system	3.95	0.43	3.5	0.46	Strongly Agreed
2.	Lack of teachers.	3.12	0.49	3.08	0.49	Agreed
3.	Inadequate infrastructure.	3.81	0.44	3.5	0.46	Strongly Agreed
4.	Poor teachers' welfare.	3.14	0.49	3.17	0.48	Agreed
5.	Lack of learning facilities, brings about poor standard and ineffective learning.	3.81	0.44	3.75	0.44	Agreed
6.	Prevalence of cultism.	3.42	0.47	2.80	0.51	Agreed
7.	Significant percentage of incompetent teachers.	3.25	0.73	3.33	0.77	Agreed
Grand Mean score		3.5	0.46	3.30	0.47	Agreed

Table 2. Mean ratings of respondents on the variables that contribute to the absence of creative and quality educational managers in Nigeria's education sector

S/N	Item description	X	SD	Remarks
1.	Absence of standard professional training.	2.69	0.94	Agreed
2.	Appointments based on connections not merit.	3.25	0.22	Agreed
3.	Emphasis on material gains.	3.59	0.95	Agreed
4.	Lack of dedication.	3.01	0.12	Agreed
5.	Discrimination in appointments.	2.78	0.50	Agreed
6.	Absence of regular supervision.	2.98	0.55	Agreed
7.	Neglect of potential creative educational managers.	3.5	0.65	Agreed
Grand Mean score		3.1	0.49	Agreed

Table 3. Mean ratings of respondents on the strategies towards ensuring that prevalence of creative and quality educational managers in Nigeria's education sector

S/N	Item Description	X	SD	Remarks
1.	Utilising standard and effective training programmes.	3.83	0.37	Strongly Agreed
2.	Basing appointments of Educational managers on merit.	3.33	0.77	Strongly Agreed
3.	Prompt replacement of incompetent educational managers.	3.5	0.65	Agreed
4.	Ensuring rigorous supervision of educational managers.	3.25	0.73	Agreed
5.	Regular in-service workshops.	3.08	0.64	Agreed
6.	Upgrading emoluments of educational managers so as to attract better calibre staff.	3.12	0.49	Agreed
7.	Regular transfers in order to inject freshness among staff.	2.80	0.51	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.27	0.48	Agreed

Table 4. Shows t-test summary reviewing the difference in the responses of male and female principals on strategies towards ensuring the implementation of creative and quality educational managers in Nigeria's education sector

Principals	No. of respondents	\bar{X}	SD	Degree of Freedom	t-cal	t-crit	Level of significance
Male Principals	100	3.43	0.74	198	0.7	1.96	0.5
Female Principals	100	3.32	0.70				

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female principals on the strategies towards ensuring the prevalence of creative and quality Educational Managers in Nigeria's Education Sector.

Table 4 showed that there was no significant difference between the responses of male and female principals on strategies towards ensuring the prevalence of creative and quality educational managers in Nigeria's Education system.

4. FINDINGS

The following findings were made:

1. Factors that contribute to Nigeria's poor education system manifest in poor funding, lack of teachers, inadequate infrastructures, poor teachers' welfare, lack of learning facilities, prevalence of cultism and significant percentage of incompetent teachers.
2. Variables that contribute to the absence of creative and quality Educational Managers in Nigeria's Education sector consisted of absence of standard orientation and professional training, faulty appointments, materialism, lack of dedication, discrimination, absence of valid and regular supervision and neglect of potential creative and quality Educational Managers.
3. Strategies towards ensuring the prevalence of creative and quality educational managers manifest in standard and effective training, meritorious appointments, adequate infrastructures, adequate learning materials, regular workshops, quality teachers and effective supervision.
4. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female principals on strategies towards ensuring the prevalence of creative and quality Educational Managers in Nigeria's Education Sector was not rejected.

5. DISCUSSION

The study revealed that certain factors account for Nigeria's poor education system. These factors are poor funding, lack of teachers, inadequate infrastructures, poor teachers' welfare, lack of learning facilities, prevalence of

cultism and incompetent teachers. These factors contribute immensely to Nigeria's poor education System. This is in consonance with the submission of Osuji [9] that secondary schools formerly under the church missions should be returned to them and of course which was done in order to maintain not only a qualitative system of education but also to check cultism and incessant teachers' industrial actions which conspire to drag secondary education system to the lowest levels in terms of academic performance in external examinations. In almost the same vein, Okocha [10] stressed that dearth of infrastructure, inadequate classrooms, offices, inadequate laboratory for teaching and research, shortage of books and journals are some of the problems that beset the educational sector in recent times.

Also revealed were the variables that contributed to the absence of creative and quality educational managers in the educational sector. These include absence of standard orientation and training, faulty appointments, materialism, lack of dedication, discrimination, poor supervision and neglect of potential creative and quality educational managers. These variables work towards ensuring absence of creative and quality Educational Managers. This tallies with the view point of Ikediugwu [11] that good school managers must carefully and effectively handle educational resources particularly money, materials and machines including computers, teaching technology and internal facilities put under their custody for proper management of fund. According to her, managing people is very central to Educational Management owing to the nature of the school system as a labour intensive and child-centred industry. Ikediugwu [11] stated that schools in Nigeria are witnessing numerous challenges ranging from poor and inadequate infrastructural and instructional facilities, shortage and poorly motivated personnel and mismanagement of funds which may be due to managerial incompetency of school managers.

Finally, the study revealed strategies that are used to ensure prevalence of creative and quality of educational managers in Nigeria's education system. These strategies include standard and effective training, meritorious appointments, adequate infrastructures, adequate learning facilities, regular workshops, quality teachers and effective supervision. These strategies can facilitate the prevalence of

creative educational Managers. This aptly coincided with the submission of the National School for Boards Association in America as cited by Umo [12] that managers in education should be those able to make the education system competitive by being able to ask and answer the following questions:

- What are our goals for enhancing the competitiveness of our students? What assumptions, data and comparisons are we using to set goals and how do we achieve them?
- Is the breadth and depth of our curriculum sufficient to teach our students what they need to know? Are our textbooks up to date?
- How are we integrating 21st century skills into core subject matter curricula?
- Do our mathematics and science teachers possess specialised training or expertise in the subject areas that they teach?
- How many Advanced Placement (AP) courses do we offer?
- What are the scores of the students who take AP examinations?
- What are we doing about students at risk of dropping out? Are we able to identify them?
- Do we have connections with the University community that can help to enrich our curriculum?
- What opportunities, both in class and extracurricular do we offer to engage students in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) fields? Should we be offering more?
- Are we working with our business community to ensure that what students are learning is relevant and applicable to the work force?

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the study concludes that Nigeria's education system needs a surgical operation. Improved orientation and training of educational managers is imperative. In the absence of a significant number of creative and quality education managers, achieving sustainable National development will remain a mirage.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. Improved funding for education in Nigeria is imperative.
2. Appointment of educational Managers should be based on merit.
3. There is need for recruitment of more teachers to fill the vacant position
4. Educational managers should attend regular workshops, seminars and other capacity building fora.
5. Emoluments of educational managers should be reviewed upwards.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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