

# **CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION IN SCHOOLS: THE ROLE OF NIGERIAN TEACHERS IN NATION BUILDING**

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## **Abstract**

*This study examined the role Nigerian Teachers in enhancing Creativity and Innovation in Schools for nation building. Four objectives were set and achieved in the study. The study was conducted in Makurdi local government area of Benue state. The study population comprised of all Senior Secondary School two (SSSII) students in 21 government owned and grant aided secondary schools in Makurdi local government area of Benue state. Sample for the study was 210 respondents. Instrument for data collected a researcher constructed questionnaire title 'Creativity and Innovation for Nation Building Questionnaire (CINBQ)'. Data was collected analysed using mean. Findings for the study revealed that Nigerian teachers have a role to play in the implementation of innovation and creativity in Education. Findings also revealed that creativity and innovation enhances nation building. Similarly, the findings show that the level of innovation and creativity in Nigerian education is very low. Finally, it was revealed that many factors militating against implementation of innovation and creativity in education. The study concluded that Teachers are nation builders; hence, any national development hinges on the abilities of the teachers especially in promoting creativity and innovation among students. It was recommended that adequate supervision of the teachers' activities and conducts should be made always at all levels to ensure that they promote creativity and innovation among students.*

**Keywords:** Creativity, Innovation and Nations Building

Every profession is important and prestigious but permits me to say that the most important and most prestigious is the teaching profession because teaching profession can be seen as the mother of all profession. This is because every profession is born out of teaching. The future of every individual and nation lies in the hands of the teacher. Ukeji (1986) in Ihua-Maduenyi (2002) confirmed this when he observed that if a doctor makes a mistake, perhaps one person might die, if a lawyer makes a mistake, perhaps, one person might go to jail, if an engineer makes a mistake, may be a bridge might collapse, but if a teacher makes a mistake, generations yet unborn will come to suffer the effect of that mistake. This perhaps explains the importance of a teacher in the society and in nation building. No wonder Nnubia (2001) quoted, Iroegbu (1993) as saying that no person ever argues that education and teacher are the life wire and mainstay of the nation in the National Policy on Education (2010) it is stated that, since no education system may rise above the quality of its teacher, teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development. This is to say that the present quality of Nigerian education is the quality of Nigerian teacher. Hence it must be noted that it is of great importance to examine some of the major concepts that will be relevant in discussing creativity and innovation: the role of a teacher in nation building.

A teacher or school teacher is a person who provides education for pupils (children) and students (adults). The teachers role is often formal and ongoing, which is been carried out at a school or in other places where formal education existed. In many countries, a person who wishes to become a teacher must first obtain specified professional qualifications or credentials from a university or college. These professional qualifications may include the study of pedagogy, the science of teaching. Teachers, like other professionals, may have to continue their education after they qualify, a process known as continuing professional development. Teachers may use a lesson plan to facilitate student learning, providing a course of study which is called the curriculum. A teacher's role may vary among cultures. Teachers may provide instruction in literacy and numeracy, craftsmanship or vocational training, the arts, religion, civics, community roles, or life skills. A teacher who facilitates education for an individual may also be described as a personal tutor or, largely historically, a governess etc. "teacher is a maker of man. He is foundation of all Education, and thus of the whole civilization of mankind, present and future. No nation reconstruction is possible without the active cooperation of the teacher." Teachers also ensure creativity in children.

Creativity is the kind of thinking that leads to new insights, novels approaches, fresh perspectives, and whole new ways of understanding and conceiving of things. The productions of creative thought include some obvious things like music, poetry, dance, dramatic literature, inventions and technical innovations. There are obvious examples as well, such as ways of conceiving of relationships that challenge presuppositions and lead one to see the world in imaginative and different ways.

Creativity is an effective resource that resides in all people and within all organizations. Creativity can be nurtured and enhanced through the use of deliberate tools, techniques and strategies. Creativity is a way of brainstorming and editing the thoughts and bringing it out through a wide actions and activities to the benefit of one or all in a society. This requires that the methods and material should be creatively woven together to generate desirable situation to produce the relevant actions.

One useful principle of creativity is to aim for an effective balance of searching to find old ideas and imaging to invent new ideas so as to combine the best of old and new ideas. It also shares useful perspectives on guided generation with a creative generation of ideas stimulated and guided by critical evaluation and free invention, search for “invent” to find creative-and-critical invention of ideas. Creativity is a drive that propels people toward realizing their fullest potentials. This leads to self-actualization, and self-actualized people are accurate in their self-perceptions and are able to find rich sources of enjoyment and stimulation in their everyday activities, (James and Lubasa, 2012:185). Creativity can arise from a combination of conscious thinking and the unconscious thinking that occurs during a non-working period of incubation. During this period, man’s thinking is wide and developing the thoughts become sintense. So if these thoughts go into action, it brings out perfect products for nation building.

Nation building is the conscious and focused application of our people's collective resources, energies, and knowledge to the task of liberating and developing the psychic and physical space that we identify as ours. It involves the development of behaviors, values, languages, institutions, and physical structures that elucidate our history and culture, concretize and protect the present, and insure the future identity and independence of the nation. Nation building is the deliberate, keenly directed and focused, and energetic projection of national culture, and the collective identity.

Nation building refers to the process of constructing or structuring a national identity using the power of the state. This process aims at the unification of the people within the state so that it remains politically stable and viable in the long run. Nation-building can involve the use of propaganda or major infrastructure development to foster social harmony and economic growth.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main aim of this study is to examine the role of nigerian teachers in enhancing creativity and invention in schools for nation building. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. Examine the role nigerian teachers play in the introduction of innovation and creativity in Education
- ii. Examine the role of creativity and innovation in nation building
- iii. Identify the levels of innovation and creativity in Nigerian education

iv. Identify factors that militate against the introduction of innovation and creativity in education.

### **Research questions**

- i. What role Nigerian teachers play in the introduction of innovation and creativity in Education?
- ii. What extent is the role of creativity and innovation in nation building?
- iii. What is the level of innovation and creativity in Nigerian education?
- iv. What are the factors that militate against the introduction of innovation and creativity in education?

### **Methodology**

#### **Area of Study**

The research covers Makurdi local government area of Benue state. The Headquarters of this local government is Makurdi with a population 191,599 people as shown by the 2006 national census figure as tabulated by the National Bureau of statistics (2006), it shares common boundary with Guma Local Government Area in the east, it is bounded in the South with Gwer West, Gwer East local government area at the east, the local government area is bounded by Obi local government of Nasarawa state.

Makurdi Local Government Area (LGA), one of the local government areas of Benue state of Nigeria lies between longitude 8o20' E and 9o E and latitude 7o 20'N and has an estimated population of 226,192 (based on 2006 National Population Census figure) and a land area of 804km<sup>2</sup>. It is made up of 10 council wards namely Nyia/North Bank, Mbalagh, Fidi, Bar, Agan, Madikpo, Mission, Ankpa, Wadata, Wailamayo (High Level/Wurukum) and Modern Market.

The inhabitants of Makurdi Local Government Area are mainly farmers and traders. The rich alluvial soil due to the activities of River Benue forms the basis for agricultural activities in the area. Makurdi local government area is used because the researcher has a mastery of the area in terms of academic challenges facing students. The study adopts a survey design.

#### **Population of the Study**

The target population of this study is the SSSII students in Makurdi local government area. There are 21 government owned and grant aided schools in Makurdi local government area of Benue state as at the time of this study. The population of the SSSII students in the 21 schools is 773. The decision to use this class is because the class is relatively stable in the school. It is neither facing the problem of being freshly introduced to secondary education (as the case of SSSI) nor preparing for any external examination (as in the case of SSSIII). It is therefore easy to obtain permission of the student authority to use them for the study.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

Balloting was used to select four schools from the 21 secondary schools in Makurdi. The secondary schools used for the study includes ECWA Secondary school North Bank, Dyege Memorial College, Akpehe, NKST Secondary School Makurdi and Government College Makurdi. A total of 30 students was selected per school to give a total of 120 students.

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument that was used for data collection was a researcher's structured questionnaire. The items of the questionnaire were derived from reviewed literature and discussions with parents. The questionnaire was constructed on a (4) point rating scale anchored on a continuum of strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree and very high, high, averagely low as well as very low.

### **Method of Data Collection**

The researcher used direct contact approach in collecting the data from students with the help of one research assistant in each secondary school to facilitate the work. Permission was sought from the school heads to distribute 120 copies of the questionnaire to students. The researcher retrieved the distributed questionnaire to ensure maximum return of the completed questionnaire.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

Data collected were analyzed with the use of descriptive statistics. Precisely, frequency, the arithmetic mean and standard deviation were employed to answer the research questions. Any item with the mean of 2.00 and above was accepted as agreement with the statement.

### **Result and Discussion**

**Research question 1:** what role Nigerian teachers play in the introduction of innovation and creativity in Education?

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the Role Nigerian Teachers Play in the Introduction of Innovation and Creativity in Education**

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{(x)}$	SD	Decision point
1	He is also taught to appreciate the value of unity, culture and traditions of his nation	42	55	18	6	3.10	.831	Accepted
2	It is the duty of the teacher and the school counselor to mould, nurture and control this tendency along useful and orderly line	34	58	21	7	2.99	.832	Accepted
3	Embrace creativity as part of learning	14	45	43	18	2.46	.888	Accepted
4	Use the most effective strategies as a skill	47	32	39	2	3.03	.888	Accepted
5	Participate in or create a program to develop creative skills	24	60	21	15	2.78	.912	Accepted
6	Use emotional connections	23	27	52	18	2.46	.969	Accepted
7	Use a creativity model	23	30	46	21	2.46	.995	Accepted
8	Brainstorm solution to a common challenge	5	26	41	48	1.90	.883	Rejected

**Source: Field work 2017**

The table presents the frequency, mean and the standard deviation on the role of Nigeria teachers play in the introduction of motivation and creativity in education. Eight item questions were presented to the respondents, seven were accepted which included, appreciate the value of unity, culture and traditions, it is the duty of the teacher and the school counselor to mould, nature and control, embracing of creativity as part of learning, the use of creative model among many others. The only item that was rejected was brainstorm solution to a common challenge with a mean score of 1.90 which falls below 2.00 decision point. Therefore, Nigerian teachers play role in introduction of innovation and creativity in education.

**Research question 2:** what extent is the role of creativity and innovation in nation building?

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the Role of Creativity and Innovation in Nation Building**

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision point
1	Enhanced socioeconomic development anchored on creativity and cultural identity	29	54	16	11	3.01	.912	Accepted
2	Enhanced opportunities for partnerships, in particular linking small and micro creative entrepreneurs to national and international markets	8	25	58	29	2.10	.844	Accepted
3	Improved capacities for creating, diversifying and distributing creative goods and services	55	37	26	7	3.12	.949	Accepted
4	The creative economy also generates non-monetary value that contributes significantly to achieving people-centered, inclusive and sustainable development	44	43	21	12	2.99	.974	Accepted
5	Make culture a driver and enabler of economic, social and environmental development processes	10	56	39	15	2.51	.820	Accepted
6	Reveal opportunities through mapping local assets of the creative economy	20	19	50	31	2.23	1.019	Accepted
7	Strengthen the evidence base through rigorous data collection as a fundamental upstream investment to any coherent creative economy development policy	414	34	35	10	2.88	.980	Accepted

**Source: Field work 2017**

The table presents the frequency, mean and standard deviation response on the role of creativity and innovation in nation building. Seven item questions were presented to the respondents; all the seven question items were accepted based on the decision point of 2.00. The accepted question items were, enhance opportunity for partnership, improved capacities for diversifying among many others. This implies that creativity and innovation played role in nation building.

**Research question 3:** what is the level of innovation and creativity in Nigerian education?

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the Level of Innovation and Creativity in Nigerian Education**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{(x)}$	SD	Decision point
1	Rate the level of sources of creativity and innovation in your school?	2	26	63	29	3.03	.925	Accepted
2	What is the level of usage of techniques that have been proven to stimulate creativity and innovation in your school?	19	48	32	21	2.01	.728	Accepted
3	Indicate the level at which your school insist on the use of process and tools to solve problems	10	42	59	9	2.54	.961	Accepted
4	How does your school encourage use of personal problem-solving style?	27	42	31	20	2.44	.754	Accepted
5	How is your student's task oriented?	23	43	44	13	2.63	1.012	Accepted

**Source: Field work 2017**

The table presents the frequency, mean and standard deviation on the level of innovation and creativity in Nigerian education. Five item questions were presented to the respondents; all the five item questions were accepted based on the 2.00 decision point. However, the overview of the rating shows an average level across the item of the questions. This implies that level of creativity and innovation in Nigerian education was on the average not on the optimum.

**Research question 4:** what are the factors that militate against the introduction of innovation and creativity in education?

**Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Factors that Militate Against the Introduction of Innovation and Creativity in Education**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{(x)}$	SD	Decision point
1	Laboratory for teaching meaningfully are not available in the schools	11	38	51	20	2.63	.916	Accepted
2	Instructional materials such as charts, models are not available for use	16	43	46	15	2.33	.863	Accepted
3	Time is always a constraint in teaching for creativity in a classroom	43	26	42	9	2.50	.879	Accepted
4	Most Teachers in secondary schools are not knowledgeable on the modern methods of teaching	31	50	22	17	2.86	.998	Accepted
5	Teachers are not motivated	9	43	54	14	2.79	.986	Accepted
6	Inability to commend creative students damping their spirit	21	28	42	29	2.39	.792	Accepted
7	Scolding students can kill the spirit of creativity in him or her	22	51	33	14	2.34	1.033	Accepted
8	Creative students are difficult to handle	16	30	56	18	2.68	.909	Accepted
9	The plague of insufficient textbook and journals hinders creativity in a classroom	21	51	30	18	2.37	.898	Accepted
10	The curriculum poses a challenge to teaching for creativity in schools					2.62	.944	Accepted

**Source: Field work 2017**

The table presents the frequency, mean and standard deviation of the respondents on the factors that militate against introduction of innovation and creativity in education. Ten item questions were presented to the respondents; all the ten item questions were accepted as factors militating against the introduction of innovation and creativity in education. Such factors include, lack of laboratory, instructional materials, time factors inadequate knowledge on the modern methods of teaching among many others. Therefore, the listed question items are some of the factors militating against the introduction of innovation and creativity in education.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The result of the research work in the research question 1 shows that 8 items question presented had mean ranged of 2.46-3.10 which are greater than the bench mark of 2.00. This implies that, Nigerian teachers play role in introduction of innovation and

creativity in education. This was in agreement with Smith, Nerantzi and Middleton (2011) on Promoting Creativity in Learning and Teaching, where the researcher explained that the role teachers enhance creativity among students. These roles include: creating an environment where learners are connected within a local community but with awareness of a larger world of potential team members sharing cognate interests, the use of effective strategies and model which embrace creativity as skills.

The result of the research question 2 which had 7 items had a mean range of 2.12 to 3.12 which are greater than the bench mark of 2.00. This implies that creativity and innovation played role in nation building. This finding was in agreement with Vinyets, (2014). Where the researcher noted that today, creativity is a key driver in the global economy. Every society calls for creativity because the key factor propelling us forward is the rise of creativity as the primary mover of our economy.”In today’s world of global competition and complex problems, creative intelligence and innovative capacity are fast becoming requirements for personal and professional success. Creativity is as important in education as literacy and we should treat it with the same status. Furthermore, creativity is basic to making our society viable because without we would lose our competitive edge”

Also the findings of Aguand (2014) on Creativity and Innovation in Education of the 21st Century for Sustainable Development in Nigeria supported the findings of this study. The study revealed that creativity and innovation in the nation’s education from primary to tertiary level will help in re-positioning the economy of the country. This in fact will lead to personal job creation that will reduce unemployment. These could be achieved through creativity and innovation in education in the 21st century in Nigeria that will in turn give empowerment to the society at large.

The research question 3 of this study found that the items on the level of innovation and creativity in the Nigerian education had a mean range of 2.01 to 3.03 which are greater than the 2.00 which is the bench mark. However, it was found that the level of creativity and innovation in Nigerian education was on the average not on the optimum as revealed in the study. The finding was affirmed by Dimnwobi, Chukwunonso and Mgbemena (2016) on Creativity, Innovation and Competitiveness in Nigeria: An Economic Exploration. Where it was revealed that Nigeria has a very low degree of creativity, innovation and competitiveness, when compared to other nations and this poses a threat to the diversification of the Nigerian economy championed by the present administration.

The results of the research question 4 which also had 10 items with a mean range of 2.33 to 2.79 which are greater than the bench mark of 2.00. This implies that respondents accepted the items presented are factors militating against introduction of innovation and creativity in education. The findings disagree with the study by Agu and Takon (2014) on Creativity and Innovation in Education of the 21st Century for Sustainable Development in Nigeria. Where the researchers found out that Examination malpractice is one of the challenges of creativity and innovation in the educational

system. Examination malpractice is a wrong doing in an examination which involves misconduct, irregularity as a situation, which is contrary to the established rules and directives to be followed in order to affect fair conduct of examination. Most of the students lack confidence in their ability to pass the examination due to inadequate facilities either by large number of student population which increases yearly while the existing facilities do not increase accordingly.

However, some teachers are not committed to their duties in order to impact the knowledge to the students.

Some students are interested in getting the certificate and not the knowledge. In this case such students do anything possible to pass the examination without actually reading and understanding the subjects. Examination malpractice could be caused by dishonesty of invigilators, poor conduct of examination, lack of books, moral, criminal tendency, and zeal to excel, teachers absenteeism, students irregular attendance and influence of peers among other factors. This phenomenon is not new but it changes each time in various levels of education. Examination malpractice has contributed to great number of unmarketable and unemployable graduates in the society, since they lack the knowledge in the certificate they have.

The study also found out that inadequate resources affect the introduction of creativity and innovation in education. Resources include both human and material resources. Human resources are sensible and knowledgeable people that can impact foundation of basic rules, principles, attitudes, values and skills to students. These human resources are students, teachers and once teachers participate in decision-making and in the development and achievement of the innovation but if they are lacking or not involved, the innovation is being jeopardized and hindered, and make achievement impossible and impracticable.

### **Conclusion**

Education is a vital instrument and bed rock for national development. The importance of teachers in making process of education possible and successful is inevitable. They are nation builders; hence, any national development hinges on the abilities of the teachers to meet the challenges. The teaching profession needs to be repositioned to possess all the attributes/characteristics of a profession. Repositioning the teaching profession to meet developmental challenges in Nigeria should be paramount in the mind of all stakeholders. The drive towards making Nigeria one of the top 20 developed economies in the world by year 2020 could only be realized if teaching profession is highly recognized by the government, thereby putting education in a strategic position towards the realization of the lofty goals of the government. Teachers are indeed the pillar to the development and building of any nation.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Federal and state governments should endeavour to supply adequate and enough equipment, tools and facilities for effective training of teachers with the libraries equipped with current books
2. Adequate funds should be made available for smooth running and management of teacher training programmes
3. Teachers' salaries and claims should be paid promptly. New teachers' salary scheme should be implemented as soon as possible.
4. Adequate and descent accommodation should be provided for teachers, irrespective of level.
5. Entry requirements into teacher training programmes should be reviewed upward. There should be a special diagnostic assessment test properly conducted as a screening measure before admitting students into pre-NCE programme.
6. Effort should be made to control students' population to avoid overcrowded classrooms.
7. There should be teacher-student ratio peculiar to teacher training programmes and which should be strictly be adhered to.
8. Adequate supervision of the teachers' activities and conducts should be made always at all levels to ensure that they promote creativity and innovation among students.
9. Creativity and innovation activities in school be supervise to enhance nation building.
10. Creativity and innovation activities be done to increase high level of participation
11. Provision of basic amenities be put in place to avoid lapses.

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