
THE IMPLICATIONS OF INNOVATION AND DIVERSENESS ON THE EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Innovation and diversity are strong driving forces that boost educational development nations, Nigeria inclusive. Therefore, it is pertinent to imbibe them in order to add value to her educational system and also to meet the technological demands of students, teachers, parents, and the general public in this 21st century. The study will take into cognizance issues surrounding the implementation of innovation and diversity on educational developments, the budgetary allocation towards the innovation and diverseness of the educational systems, the goals and objectives of the government towards its full actualization. Therefore, this paper recommends that: experts on educational innovative policies should be employed for proper implementation, the federal government should allocate more funds to our educational systems to match up with other developed countries, innovation and diversity committee should be set up to monitor its actualization for adequate, effective, structured, standardized innovative changes that meet the educational needs of students, parents, and all educational administrators.

Keywords: Innovation, diverseness, educational development, innovation committee.

Introduction

Innovation and diversity are strong driving forces that boost the educational development of nations, Nigeria inclusive. Therefore, it is pertinent to imbibe them in order to add value to her educational system and also to meet the technological demands of students, teachers, parents, and the general public in this 21st century. The concept and issues of implications of innovation and diverseness on the educational development in Nigeria need to be addressed critically. This is because an effective and workable educational system is the bedrock of any country so there is a need to delve into strategic, creative, and diverse methods to bring about solutions to issues faced by us as a nation, (Ige, 2013). This is pertinent because third-world countries have affirmed the crucial role of a workable educational system in their economic and

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technological advancement. In other words, education is the driving force for national development which entails social, economic, cultural, political, and manpower development, (Ige, 2013). This is the reason why most developed countries have placed high values and as such invest more in the education of their citizens because education has the power and tendencies of enhancing the welfare and productivity of the people and most importantly remains the tool for any country's sustainable development, (Ige, 2013).

The word innovation means introducing a new method, or idea designed to cause a change in different areas and perspectives. Relating it to educational development, it is delving into new areas in technology for the advancement and progress of an effective educational system. Innovation and diverseness most often bring about positive changes in any area of interest, especially education but there are implications when trying to enforce these changes, particularly in Nigeria. The first innovation that took place in Nigeria was the setting up of the education system and introduction of the British curriculum after her independence which had positive and negative impacts to date.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to bring to knowledge and address some areas in which innovation and diversity have impacted the educational development of Nigeria. Igberadja (2014) postulated that the introduction of the British curriculum into the education system of Nigeria lacked clarity on how, what, where, and when it should be implemented hence bringing about irregularities in the enforcement of innovation and diversity amongst the various sectors of the education system. He also added that for there to be full implementation of innovation and diversification in the education systems, the government and its citizens must have a common goal to give our children the best education in order to secure their future. This is because one of the proofs to show that a country is well developed is having a well-educated population thereby boosting the educational and all-round development in the country, (Igberadja, 2014). Another issue was the faulty thinking pattern of educational stakeholders and the government which led to incessant changes in the curriculum from the 6-3-3-4 to the present 9-3-4 which has affected both the students and the country's educational development negatively to a large extent that students no longer get the best of educational knowledge and practices from their institutions of learning because of the lack of commitment by the government in boosting and securing their educational future as well as the nations', (Dimnwobi, Ekesiobi, and Mgbemena, 2015). They also postulated that with these innovations and its implication on the educational system, Nigeria is still experiencing low-quality education practices and as such been unable to match up with other developed countries thereby questioning the credibility of her education system, educational and economic development.

Issues around the Implementation of Innovation and Diversity in Nigeria's Educational Development.

Globally in the previous years, the ultimate focus has been on the improvement of the educational system through the provision of quality governmental services that promote educational development in Nigeria, (Dimnwobi, Ekesiobi, and Mgbemena, 2015). Most recently, the low quality of the educational practices and its product (forge certification, impersonation, low mental expression of self, examination malpractices of both educational administrators and students, etc) at various levels of educational institutions has become so alarming and questionable that these various issues being experienced calls for urgent attention to innovative and diverse educational practices so as to boost the resources towards lasting progress in the country as relating to educational development. This was supported by another researcher who asserted that a nation's wealth is generated and not legacy hence there is a need to take into cognizance the requisiteness of high levels of innovation and diverseness in our educational system to be able to meet the technological demands of the citizens towards mental, psychological, social and behavioral development and as well be able to measure up with other developed countries, (Ebhota 2014). For this to be achieved, countries should begin to invest through research, development, and several educative schemes because these are keys to facilitating innovation and diversity geared towards boosting a country's all round development. It also buttressed the fact that these two concepts play a crucial role in human development, innovation, and technological advancement for a nation's success, (Naude and Nagler, 2015).

Another implication that innovation and diverseness have on Nigeria is joblessness or unemployment which has been for ages and this is on the increase daily plaguing citizens whether educated or illiterate, (Naude and Nagler (2015). This assertion was supported by Akbar and Haitham (2014) who postulated that if in the actual sense the educational system has been experiencing some levels of innovation and diversity, they would have been able to meet the technological aspirations of the citizens towards the development of relevant monitoring, assessment, policies, and committees for adequate implementation of innovative strategies by upgrading the curriculum to suit the needs of the learners in all ramifications so as to add values to the educational system (Bumein and Mbachu, 2014). In the same light, it is high time the government comes to the reality that her educational system needs an utmost level of innovation and diversity and as such enough funds should be allocated to all sectors thereby meeting the expectations of students, staff, parents, and the public enabling them to be able to match up with their counterparts from other developed countries (Emmanuel 2012). Also, there should be even distribution of educational resources to the various sectors in diverse communities for equity and justice. This is because, during the creation of schools, it was discovered that there were irregularities in the allocation and distribution of adequate resources to boost educational development in Nigeria. This led to the government accepting responsibilities by sharing a larger proportion to itself while giving autonomy to states to make available funds to their schools, promoting gender equality hence facilitating the learning process of students and preparing them for a greater future, (Callaway and Musone cited in Wodi and

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Dokubo 2012). The low rate of innovation and diverse practices being experienced by the various institutions of learning led to most parents sending their children and wards to foreign countries to study and thereafter return to occupy educational positions which will go a long way to enhancing educational development but there was a clause because the government was left with several choices on whether to shift focus in the upgrading process of the education sectors in Nigeria, (Oluwadare 2015).

This was reaffirmed by Adepoju and Fabiyi (2007), who argued that, if innovation and diverseness must benefit the people and nation, teachers who are distributors of knowledge should be the first to be attended to. The reason is that they discovered that most teachers are not well educated and hence must be professionally trained to enable them to render qualitative services to the students and government in the course of their duties. Despite the enormous natural resources Nigeria is blessed with to generate huge resources to boost its educational and economic development by catering to the well-being of its citizens, unfortunately, Nigeria is lacking in providing such civic responsibilities due to the inability of inculcating new technologies into its educational system. The reason may be that other studies have somehow tried concentrating on areas of education as it relates to national development but none have carried out studies on the implications of innovation and diversity on the educational development in Nigeria precisely, (World Bank, 2016).

Factors That Affect Innovation and Diversity in the Educational Development in Nigeria.

There are some factors that affect innovation and diversity in boosting educational development in Nigeria which are:

1. Utilization of adequate teaching and learning materials,
2. Cultural diversity
3. Socio-economic influence,
4. Political instability,
5. Professional qualifications and experience of the teacher
6. Political issues
7. Institutional issues
8. Manpower development issues
9. Budgetary issues

Ezenyilimba (2015), Mehdi,Pazhouhesh and Moshiri (2011) and Nwafor and Odoemelum(2022)

In a study by Ige, (2013), he asserted that though the government has outlined several innovative schemes for the purpose of enhancing her education system but has not been able to put them into practice which may be a result of either lack of proper funding, employment of creative personnel, or standard implementation geared towards achieving its goals and objectives and also, there is need for the review of the schooling curriculum from primary to tertiary levels to suit the needs of the learners, (Ige, 2013).

Also, in order to imbibe innovative and diversified teaching and learning methods into the educational system, there must be an introduction of vocational education into the curriculum from primary to tertiary levels in order to facilitate the potential embedded in our students for personal and national development and also, appropriate monitoring and evaluation should be enforced by professional authorities such as Universal basic education board, (UBE), National Commission for colleges of Education (NCCE), National Universities Commission (NUC), to see the rationale behind its full actualization, (Jaja 2013). This is because, as an individual, being innovative is the application of new and diverse thoughts, ideas, and skills for the betterment of oneself and a nation at large, thereby changing the narrative for a more positive reflection on the country. In line with this, Adepoju and Fabiyi, (2007) stated that the implementation of creative and diverse education practices will enhance the educational development of a country globally.

Budgeting Allocation towards Innovation and Diversity in the Educational Development in Nigeria.

From previous studies by Mehdi, Pazhouhesh, and Moshiri, (2011) it could be seen that with no doubt the educational arm of Nigeria is being affected negatively by some re-occurring factor such as:

1. Political issues
2. Institutional issues
3. Manpower development issues
4. Budgetary allocation issues

(Ezenyilimba (2015) and Nwafor and Odoemelam,(2022).

The challenges of the educational system in Nigeria can be linked to the portion of the Federal Government Budget allocation to the educational sector. The reason is that over the years, the budgetary allocation to the educational sector has been fluctuating in that, the 80% being shared to this sector is being diverted to the payment of salaries, allowances, emoluments, and personnel welfare among others, to the detriment of infrastructural development and other capital - intensive projects which could have to be a pathway to boost the quality of education in the country and in this, standard knowledge, mental and self-development are experienced and modeled through teachers to students

And from other sources of knowledge such as the internet. This will in turn facilitate academic network among students, which will enable them to braze up with their colleagues globally but the money being allocated to the sector has not been utilized judiciously for the betterment of people, (Oseni, 2012) and this has become an issue of concern because our graduates are now half-baked, unemployable, and even rejected compared to their colleagues that schooled in other African countries due to lack of innovative and diverse skills which would have been acquired if the federal government had disbursed enough funds to spearhead and spread through to the various sectors in order to meet their needs educationally.

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It is on this note that Nigeria needs to invest by increasing its budgetary allocation to the educational sector. For example, Ghana's investment in education in previous years has been between the range of 20% and 40% of its annual budget, in 2012, Ghana invested 36.7% in its educational sector (UNESCO, 2008) which is above its prescription of 26% allocation to educational sectors by countries. In 2015, Namibia invested about 30.9% of its national budget in education, likewise, the Tunisian government dedicated 33.2% of its national budget to the sector. In addition to this, other countries like Botswana, Egypt, Jamaica, Kenya, Morocco, Mauritius, and South Africa allocated 20.1%, 27.9%, 21.7%, 28.5%, 16.5%, 19/2%, and 19.0% of their annual budget to education respectively (UNESCO 2008) and practically, countries like Ghana, Morocco, Namibia, and Senegal have achieved these expectations and exceeded the UNESCO 26% education allocation standard. It is so sad that Nigeria which has been rated as "the Giant of Africa", the biggest economy endowed country with numerous natural resources and the largest population amongst the African countries is yet to actualize it and this may be linked to the reason for youth brain-drain on relocation to other countries to study and acquire quality education and also seek for greener pastures which are lacking in our country today, (Akinyemi Ofem and Adebisi, 2012

Conclusion

Given the above illustrations, it has been observed that the improvement of innovation and diversity in the educational development in the country is been entangled with some issues such as lack of adequate funding, wrong perception of the people on vocational education, political instability, institutional issues, and manpower development issue, and so on. In addition to this, research which is another vital tool for innovation and diversity in our educational system is also being influenced by various factors such as lack of qualified researchers in the country, low investment on research and development, the issue of adoption of research findings, infrastructural development issues, governmental policy, attitudinal issues, and irregularities in the implementations of the said policy and these can only be resolved if the positions in the educational system are been occupied by innovative minded and well-educated persons who are proactive, bold enough to adapt and confront these issues so as to have an effective education system for national development. Also, there is a need for structural transformation through the contribution of education and research that are vital for promoting technological innovation and diversity which is necessary to enhance the educational development in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The above study, therefore, highlighted some recommendations that can be implemented for promoting innovation and diversity in our educational system. These include:

1. The government should allocate at least 26% of its federal allocation to education, as against the amount disbursed to the sector. Also, the Nigerian government should invest at least 1% of GDP in research and development activities, this would set the standard upon which creativity and innovation depend on.
2. Also, the federal government of Nigeria could set up a special committee to ensure that the allocations made to education and research and development is fully utilized. This committee is to be deployed all over schools across all levels in Nigeria to discover proactive minds, and to train them for national development.
3. The government is admonished to develop a Science, Technology, and Innovation policy that are conversant with the national policy on development. In actualizing this, Nwafor and Odoemelam, (2022), asserted that the federal government should ensure that persons irrespective of their socio-economic level in the country are given equal opportunities in all ramifications.
4. The government, private sector, and the government (Public-Private-Community Partnership) should be encouraged to ensure a multi-purpose and all- encompassing curriculum for the developing economy of Nigeria. This partnership will promote an equal balance between the enforcement of practical and theoretical approaches in the educational sector.
5. Motivational teaching personnel is to be properly deployed to schools at all levels and also be given due appraisals in order to identify knowledge and breach the gap for national awareness imparted on students.
6. There should be equal accessibility of research findings gotten from relevant sources to all involved for diversification purposes and also for the betterment of the citizens.
7. Professional Educational psychologists and Professional Guidance counselors should be employed and empowered to function adequately in the training of teachers and all educational personnel on the implications of innovation and diversity on the total development of an individual, organization/institution, and society at large. Thereby the awareness and need to acquire more knowledge will be enhanced

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