Challenges of Quality Secondary Education in 21 st Century in A Developing Economy

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Abstract

The study investigated challenges of quality secondary education in 21st century developing economy. This study was carried out in Owerri Education of Imo State. Based on the purpose of the study one research question and one hypothesis guided the study. The study adopted descriptive research design from a population of 2,203 teachers, a sample of 150 teachers was randomly selected for the study. The instrument used for data collection was self-structured modified Likert type questionnaire titled Challenges of challenges of quality secondary education scale (CQSES). The reliability co-efficient (r) of 0.90 were obtained using Cronbach alpha method. Data collected were analyzed using Mean, standard deviation for the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypothesis. The results showed that there are challenges of the inadequacy of basic infrastructural and educational facilities, incompetent teachers, lack of ICTs and it's non application in teaching and learning, it was recommended that Politicians should stop recruiting non teachers into the teaching profession but rather put up vibrant in-service training and retraining of teachers.

Keywords: Challenges, Quality, Quality Secondary Education

INTRODUCTION

The Federal Ministry of Education in Nigeria, FME (2013) recognizes Education as an instrument "par excellence" for effecting national development. Therefore, at any level of the Educational system in Nigeria, education must meet the needs of social, economic, political, scientific and technological national development. It therefore, becomes imperative for stakeholders in education industry to operate education to respond to changes the educational system demands especially in the secondary education. Secondary education in Nigeria is the education children receive after primary education and before tertiary stage. It occurs in two stages each lasting for 3 years. That is, the junior secondary school (JSS) and the Senior Secondary School (SSS). The broad goals of secondary education as outlined in the National Policy on Education (2013) are:

- 1. Preparation of the individual for useful living within the society.
- 2. Preparation for higher education

Specifically, secondary education in Nigeria shall amongst other aims: Inspire students within the desire for self-improvement, helps in the achievement of excellence, raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the dignity of labour, live as good citizens and provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development (FME2013). Thus, secondary education plays a fundamental but complex role in preparing young learners for the labour market, especially for students who leave secondary education for a job. Hence, an increasing number of students in secondary education mean increasing diverse talents, diverse job interests and job opportunities. Unfortunately, the objectives of secondary education in Nigeria particular have not been fully achieved because student's desire for achievement and transition to tertiary institutions has become very low recently as a result of poor performances in the terminal examinations (Olatoun, 2012). More worrisome also is the fact that, the result of most of the students from secondary schools in the state has not been impressive over the years, resulting in difficulty of students transiting to tertiary institutions and gaining meaningful employment opportunities. These may have contributed to the proliferation of the use of outmoded capital, equipment and methods of production among the population, most of whom are unskilled. By implication, their marginal productivity is extremely low and this leads to low real income, low savings, low investment and consequently low rate of capital formation and a consequent vicious cycle of poverty. Therefore, there is need to investigate the quality of secondary education.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

The concept of quality has attracted many definitions from several scholars. Kalusi (2001) argued that quality is a complex concept and there is hardly any consensus. According to DuBrin, in Romina (2013) quality is a desirable attribute of a product or service that distinguishes it for the person seeking the attribute. Viewed from this definition, quality could be said to have the attribute of worth and acceptance. Nevertheless, DuBrin maintained that good quality should possess the characteristics of conformance to expectation, conformance to requirement, excellence and value and loss of avoidance. Asiyai and Oghuvbu (2009) defined quality as a measure of how good or bad the products of the system are in terms of their academic performance and meeting established standards. World Organization of Standardization in Romina (2013) defined quality as the totality of features and characteristics of a product of services that bear on its ability to satisfy stated needs.

Article 11 of the World Declaration on Education (2003) sees quality as a multi-dimensional concept which should encompass all the functions and activities in schools. Such activities of secondary education have been highlighted as teaching, research and scholarship, community service, staffing, students, infrastructures and educational facilities, equipment and the academic environment (World conference on education in Romina 2013). High quality delivery is a prerequisite for effective productivity in education industry and hence quality education is an instrument for effecting national development. According to Ekong (2006), quality builds knowledge, live skills, perspectives, attitudes and values. When quality education is delivered high enough to meet set standards, the products of education should be able to perform well in the world of work in real life situation. When quality is low, performance cannot meet the set standards. Hence one can say that the quality of education has declined below set standard.

Quality education is a 'magic word' that can set everything straight in terms of economic development and growth of any nation. Quality education in this context can be attributed to the entire components of secondary education, which include: curriculum, teachers, infrastructure, facilities, instructional methods and students. In this era of globalization, there is need to revitalize and modernize our economy in other to reduce the level poverty in the country. This can be

actualized when the right type of education, skills, attitudes and competencies are impacted to the learners. (Ariguzo and Oguh, 2017). Quality education is that education that is relevant and adapted to the needs of the society (Ndiomu, 2005). He argued that such needs must meet the standards in health, growth, and physical survival in a complex and globalized world. It implies education that is worthwhile and which empowers the recipients with relevant skills, knowledge, ideas, values and attitudes needed for him /her to make informed decisions and live a self-sustaining life.

Quality education refers to the worth of the inputs into education systems, teachers, instructional facilities and evaluation procedures which translates to the outputs. Majasan (2019) maintained that quality education is value-loaded arguing that quality education should produce disciplined behaviour, hard work, improved cultural heritage and mutual respect within and outside the school community. If a society expects quality manpower for rapid development and transformation, quality education is a must do affair (Majasan, 2019). This he continued is because quality education is expected to address critical issues like the dignity of labour, quality leadership and committed citizenship, industrial harmony, political stability, religious tolerance, self-reliance and security. Quality education entails that the products of the institutions should be able to perform according to expected standard and compete favourably with their peers in other countries of the world. Quality education is the education that produces a complete person. Complete in the sense that the person is intellectually, morally, physically, emotionally and socially developed. Hence Akinpelu, (2000) argued that education without quality can even be more dangerous than no education, stressing that without quality, education has no value.

Despite the importance accorded to quality education there are still challenges affecting secondary education in Nigeria. Several factors pose as challenges of quality secondary education in Nigeria 21st century. These factors are highlighted and discussed below:

Prevalence of Incompetent Teachers: The teacher factor is the most crucial of the challenges of quality of secondary education in the country. This is because; it is the teacher that impacts desired knowledge, skills, values, attitude and competence into the learners. A teacher cannot perform these tasks when he is incompetent. The quality of any educational system depends on the quality of teachers. The quality of teacher depends on the academic and professional qualification as well as the level of competence and dedication to the primary function. Secondary school teachers are prepared at the colleges of education and faculties of education of universities either as regular or sandwich/part-time programme. A major defect is the poor quality of intakes into full time (regular teacher's education programmes). Majority of students admitted into the faculty of education are those who find it difficult to get admitted into other faculties or those withdrawn from other courses due to their academic inability to continue scholarship. This situation has made the teaching profession to be regarded by many as the profession of the never do wells. But the program in terms of the structure and quality leaves much to be desired. In addition, in Nigeria, teaching has become a general trade where every Tom, Dick and Harry go into without barrier, to run away at will. Corroborating this view, Mohammed (2016) asserted that such teachers go to teach with their minds already made up to the effect that once a better job comes, they flee out.

Also, there are persons not trained in the pedagogy of teaching, all in the classroom. They are civil engineers, geologist, radiographers, quantity surveyors and the like in the class room teaching. As a result, many are in doubt as to whether teaching is a profession. Even with the advent of the Teachers Registrations Council of Nigeria (TRCN), the situation is becoming worse daily because recruitment of teachers is highly politicalized. Again, the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) is quite inept in this regard as it has not been able to project and articulate the noble objectives of the teaching profession. This situation has inadvertently led to the influx of quacks and mediocre by

politicians into the teaching profession. This negative trend has greatly affected the standard and quality of teaching and learning in Nigeria.

Poor Teacher Motivation: Motivation is the inner urge that pushes, directs or influences the efforts an individual puts into performing a task. Teachers must be motivated to get them put in their maximum efforts towards the realization of organizational goals. Teacher motivation refers to factors within the school system which if provided to teachers will help improve their teaching effectiveness and thus improve the quality output of students. Such motivational factors could help to propel, channel, sustain and influence the teachers behaviour towards striving for excellence. The teacher's roles are very encompassing involving myriads of functions, which can be undermined if teachers are not motivated. This is the situation in Nigeria. Several researchers have reported poor teacher motivation in Africa, especially Nigeria (Ejiogu, Ejiogu & Unamba, 2018, Asiyai, 2009, Ingwu and Ekefre, 2006). A UNESCO report by Wire (2003) revealed that school teachers in Africa are unmotivated, under qualified, underpaid and many chose their profession for lack of something better to do. According to Ingwu and Ekefre (2006), the underpayment of the Nigeria teacher has a variety of negative motivational consequences including low productivity, low quality and absenteeism. In addition, the attitudinal disposition of the society towards the teacher due to poor treatment and low esteem accorded Nigerian teachers has led to endless strikes by the NUT which compound the quality of secondary education.

Inadequate Funding: Inadequate funding is the most critical challenge that has threatened the attainment of good quality secondary education in Nigeria. The problem of inadequate funding of education has been a bane to educational development in the country. Onokerrhoraye, (2014) maintained that a major constraint to attaining academic excellence in Nigerian secondary schools is financial constraints which made many teachers to be working under difficult circumstances. Many secondary schools of learning in Nigeria were unable to build class rooms, students' hostels, equip laboratories and workshops and payment of staff salaries, research grants, allowances and medical bills (Ivara and Mbanefo cited in Asiyai 2005).

Poor Policy Implementation: Poor policy implementation is a challenge to quality delivery in education. The poor quality delivery is responsible for the abysmal low performance of graduates. Anyakoha, (2008) and Obebe, (200) argued that our policies are written by knowledgeable writers who have foresight and believe strongly in what they write for the future but the problem comes when it rises to translating theory into practice by implementers. However, several factors could be adduced as inhibitors to smooth implementation of educational policies and thereby resulting to poor quality delivery. Such factors as government underfunding of education Okoroma, (2001) noted that money the government votes for running the schools does not get to the institutions and the little that gets there is normally wasted by education managers. Akinmusuru, (2009) attributed the low quality of Nigerian secondary school graduates to little attention given to teaching effectiveness, stressing that institutional policies are not geared towards making students learning a priority.

Lack of Resources: Quality secondary education is dependent on the quality and quantity of human and material resources put in place for effective teaching and learning. The lack of infrastructures such as science laboratories, workshops, students' hostels, libraries and electricity will affect the quality of education. For good quality delivery, these facilities must meet the minimum standard specified by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). For quality teaching and learning, the class size must be small for effective student's/teacher interaction. Unfortunately, most secondary

schools in Nigeria, the classrooms are overcrowded with majority of the students standing at the corridors during lectures. Besides, the libraries in most schools of learning in the country are stocked with obsolete text books while some lack school libraries. In the opinion of Unegbu (2020), the library is at the heart of the academic effort in schools, colleges and universities. For an institution to be strong academically, it must have a formidable library put in place. The undesirable conditions of schools of higher learning in Nigeria have been worrisome to many scholars (Asiyai, 2005 and Odetunde 2004). Students of institutions of higher learning in Nigeria are learning in dilapidated buildings which are poorly ventilated, illuminated, unfurnished and environmentally depressing and disabling situations. Even many teachers share small offices. Therefore, there is need for concern regarding the poor quality of graduates of secondary education in Nigeria.

Lack of information communication technology facilities: Another challenge to quality attainment in secondary education in Nigeria is lack of information communication technology facilities in schools of learning. As part of her education reform effort, Nigerian government adopted information communication technologies in all levels of education since information communication technology integration in educational practices is meant to improve teaching and learning, enhance education research, enhance collaboration among peers and improve quality of education. Unfortunately, in most secondary schools in the country, there is low supply of computers, multimedia projectors, electronic white boards, and automation of classrooms and teachers' offices. According to Resnick, (2005) these new digital technologies make possible a learning revolution in education. As rightly noted by Onuma, (2007) information and communication technologies could be used to prepare lesson plan, collect data and analyse students' achievement. Curriculum content could be enriched through search from the internet by teachers. Through such internet search, information and relevant school practices which are unknown to teachers and students and which cannot be found in textbooks, can easily be downloaded for use. Information and communication technology in education has been continuously linked to higher efficiency, higher productivity and higher educational outcomes, including quality of cognitive, creative, and innovative thinking (Olatoye, 2011). Despite the role of information communication technologies in enhancing teaching and learning, researches abound in support of lack of information communication technology tools in secondary schools of learning in the country (Akomolafe, 2008; Onwumere, 2008; Sulaiman, 2008; Asiyai, 2010).

Lack of In-Service Training for Teachers: In service training is the training given to employees while in the employment in order to enhance their performance of task. In this era of knowledge and digital revolution, secondary school teachers need to be updated in knowledge and skills on a continuous basis. This is because knowledge of today is only sufficient for today. In addition, the incorporation of ICT into the curriculum presupposes the availability of computer literate teachers. Teachers need to update their knowledge in innovative learning techniques and the use of modern instructional materials through in-service training. The computer literate teachers will in turn transform the knowledge and skills to the learners. The problem of inadequacy in service programmes for training and retraining of teachers has been a terrible challenge of quality secondary education.

Overcrowded Classroom: This is another challenge that poses a threat to quality secondary education. In most public secondary schools in Nigeria, the class size is overwhelming for teachers. The federal ministry of education (2004) recommended a teacher: students ratio of 1:40 for normal classes and 1:20 for practical classes. But a visit to some secondary schools in urban centers, a class

size of 1:80 is evidenced. This overcrowded classroom size poses a powerful challenge to the teachers and the quality of his teaching. When the classroom size becomes overwhelming, teachers spend much of the time handling disciplinary problems and interactions which are at variance with teaching and learning objectives. Studies have shown that the teaching effectiveness of teachers and educational achievements of students are dependent on a number of factors of which school population and class size is paramount (Fabunmi, Brai-Abu & Adeniji,2001).

Students Negative Attitude to Learning and Examination Malpractice: Students' negative attitude towards learning and their involvement in examination malpractice are two ills that have threatened the very foundation of secondary education in Nigeria. Majority of the students at this level are not interested in learning. The quest to get money has jeopardized their interest in learning. They prefer the easy way out and this has greatly affected the desire for acquiring new knowledge and skills needed for national development This negative attitude of students is a reflection of the moral decadence in the society, line with this Onyeahu (2006) opined that: Nigerian students are faced with the desire to get rich quick. This is because the rich people in the society are highly regarded more than the highly educated without money. Because of this, Nigerian students develop flares for programmes that would fetch immediate cash in their pockets. Consequently, students absent themselves from school. Some while at school do not attend classes and perpetrate all kinds of During examinations, they indulge examination malpractice. negative malpractice is a terrible crime against society, the future of the children and God. It robs the educational system of integrity.

Cultism and other vices: A big challenge to quality in secondary education system in Nigeria is the increasing activities of secret cult groups, kidnappers and other vices. The secondary education in Nigeria are under siege barded and almost ruined by secret cults (Onoyase and Onoyase 2005). As a result of the activities of cult groups and kidnappers' majority of students, teachers and their families live in perpetual fear. Some of these cult groups indulge in arm robbery, rape, assassination and infrastructure destruction. They cheat in the examination openly and threaten teachers when caught. The tensions induced on members of secondary education communities as a result of the activities of these secret cult groups and kidnappers tend to generate negative impacts on quality of secondary education in Nigeria.

Brain drain: A big challenge to the quality of education in Nigeria is the problem of brain drain. Over the past decades, there has been mass exodus of brilliant and most talented teachers to other sectors of the economy. Some of the teachers left the secondary school to join the business world, some joined politics while others left Nigeria for better services. As succinctly put by Alli, (2000) many experienced and young teachers are fleeing Nigeria from the frustration of education life into more rewarding and more challenging sectors of the economy and even to overseas countries. Brain drain has led to decline in research outputs from institutions of learning in Nigeria vis-à-vis the disappearance of research centers in secondary schools. Research brings about improvement in teaching and learning.

Poor leadership: Poor leadership both at the government level and at the management level have been a big challenge to quality in secondary education in Nigeria. Since the nineties, the government of the country has not shown enough commitment to secondary education development in Nigeria. One of the several indices for properly evaluating government commitment to educational development in any country is budgetary allocation and disbursement to education. It is clear that the

government of the country is not committed to quality education. Additionally, poor leadership of some Nigeria Union of Teachers has been a bane to the attainment of quality in secondary education in Nigeria. Secondary education in Nigeria exist because they are goals to be attained. These goals can be effectively attained when the human resources within the institutions are properly managed for their positive impacts on productivity. This is the place of leadership in secondary schools. The duty of leadership is to reduce problems within the system in order to enhance efficiency. But research has shown that most staff disputes in Nigerian secondary education system since the nineteen eighties were attributed to the high handedness and tyranny of some administrators of the schools (Obiegbu, 2003). Accordingly, Osiebe (2006) argued that poor leadership of some administrators by not involving staff union members in decision making while Iyayi, (2002) argued that dismissal of some teachers without following due process were indication of poor governance which made many staff of secondary schools de-motivated to serious academic pursuit. Additionally, Bamiro, (2012) maintained that the unfavourable governance which lead to series of strikes resulting to closure of schools has accounted for low quality in secondary education in Nigeria.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to identify various challenges of quality secondary education in the 21st century in a developing economy. Specifically, the study seeks:

- i. To examine the challenges of quality secondary education in the 21st century in a developing economy.
- ii. To find out if there is a significant difference between the mean scores of teachers in urban and rural schools on the challenges of quality secondary education in the 21st century education in a developing economy?

Research Question

One research question guided the study

1. What are the challenges of quality secondary education in the 21st century education in a developing economy?

Hypothesis

HO1: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers in urban and rural schools on the challenges of quality secondary education in the 21st century in a developing economy?

METHODOLOGY

This research work adopted descriptive survey research design, since no variable was manipulated in this study. The population of the study comprise of 2, 203 teachers in Owerri Educational Zone 1 of Imo State. A sample size of 150 teachers was used for the study. The instrument used for the collection of the data is a self -structured Questionnaire titled Challenges of Quality Secondary Education Scale (CQSES. The items were constructed based on literature reviewed on challenges of quality secondary education in the 21st century in a developing economy. The CQSES was measured on a 4-point likert-type format of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree, which were assigned numerical values, 4, 3, 2, and 1. A total of 150 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and collected personally by the researchers with the help of the research assistance. The face and content validity of the instrument were done by two experts in measurement and evaluation. A Cronbach alpha measure of 0.90 were obtained as the reliability index. The schools involved were

visited by the researchers and the questionnaires were administered. A copy of the instruments was given to each of the teachers. The instruments were collected on completion. The instrument was administered to the teachers by the researchers with the help of three trained research assistants. The instruments were administered and retrieved on the same day from the teachers. The descriptive statistic of mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significant.

Research question one: What are the challenges of quality secondary education in the 21st century education in a developing economy?

Table 1. Mean and Stand Deviation on the Challenges of Quality Secondary Education in the 21st Century Education in a Developing Economy

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	SD	DECISIONS
5/11				
1	Prevalence of Incompetent Teachers	3.36	1.4	Accepted
2	Poor Teacher Motivation	3.16	1.1	Accepted
3	Inadequate funding	3.11	1.0	Accepted
4	Poor policy implementation	3.23	1.3	Accepted
5	Lack of resources	3.21	1.9	Accepted
6	Lack of information communication technology facilities	3.00	1.0	Accepted
7	Lack of In-Service Training for Teachers	3.06	1.6	Accepted
8	Overcrowded Classroom	3.07	1.6	Accepted
9	Students Negative Attitude to Learning and Examination	3.09	1.7	Accepted
	Malpractice			
10	Cultism and other vices	3.45	1.4	Accepted
11	Brain drain	2.99	1.0	Accepted
12	Poor leadership	3.46	1.4	Accepted

Results in Table 1 shows that all the items scored above 2.50. this implies that Prevalence of incompetent teachers, Poor teacher Motivation, Inadequate funding, Poor policy implementation, Lack of resources, Lack of information communication technology facilities, Lack of In-service training for teachers, overcrowded classroom, Students negative attitude to Learning and Examination malpractice, Cultism and other vices, Brain drain and Poor leadership are the challenges of quality secondary education in the 21st century education in a developing economy.

Hypothesis

HO₁: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers in urban and rural schools on the challenges of quality secondary education in the 21st century education in a developing economy?

Table 2: T-test Analysis Between Mean Scores of Teachers in Urban And Rural Schools

LOCAT	TON N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-tab	DECISION
Urban	80	3.40	1. 3	148	1.76	0.08	
Rural	70	3.50	1.2				

Testing the hypothesis at $\alpha = 0.05$, df = 148, a t-value of 1.76 which is significant at 0.08 was obtained. Since the significant value of 0.08 is greater than the α value of 0.05, then the null

hypothesis is retained. This implies that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers on the challenges of quality secondary education in the 21st century education in a developing economy.

CONCLUSION

The numerous challenges confronting the realization of quality secondary education in Nigeria have been identified and vividly discussed in this study. They include amongst others, the inadequacy of basic infrastructural and educational facilities, incompetent teachers, lack of ICTs and it's non application in teaching and learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Nigeria to attain sustainable growth and development via secondary education, quality education delivery must be the priority of everybody. To tackle the challenges identified in the study, the following were recommended:

- 1. Politicians should stop recruiting non teachers into the teaching profession but rather put up vibrant in-service training and retraining of teachers.
- 2. Teacher motivation should be put into the political agenda.
- 3. Stakeholders in secondary education, wealthy individuals, religious organizations and the private sector should collaborate with government in the provision of basic infrastructural and educational facilities and ICTs to match the students' population.
- 4. Admission policy into teacher education programmes should be reformed.
- 5. Parents should ensure proper upbringing of their children. School counsellors, teachers and principals should continue to provide moral leadership in school.

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